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# THE BEST BRITISH SHORT STORIES OF 1929

*Edited by*

EDWARD J. O'BRIEN

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# THE BEST BRITISH SHORT STORIES OF 1929

## WITH AN IRISH AND COLONIAL SUPPLEMENT

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EDITED BY

EDWARD J. O'BRIEN

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NEW YORK 1929

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TO
NUGENT BARKER

# BY WAY OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I make grateful acknowledgment to the following authors, editors, and publishers for permission to reprint the stories included in this volume: Martin Armstrong, Nugent Barker, H. E. Bates, Mrs. O'Gorman Anderson,. the Editor of *Harper's Magazine,* Messrs Mathews and Marrot, Ltd., David Garnett, Eleanor Gaukroger, E. D. Goitein, Dorothy Johnson, Eric Linklater, J. B. Morton, George Oliver, Sir Squire Sprigge, M.D., L. A. G. Strong, E. H. Lacon Watson, Malachi Whitaker, Brinsley MacNamara, Alfred H. Mendes, Algernon Wharton, Frank O'Connor, Sean O'Faolain, the Editor of *The Hound and Horn,* Canon J. O. Hannay, the Editor of *The Forum,* Daniel Corkery, the Editor of *Columbia,* Margaret O'Leary, the Editor of *The Dial,* Pauline Smith, Messrs Jonathan Cape, Ltd., and Messrs The Talbot Press, Ltd.

I wish to make special acknowledgment for invaluable assistance in the preparation of this book for the press to Mary Gretton.

If I have overlooked any name in these acknowledgments, it has been through inadvertence, and I trust that the omission will be overlooked.

I shall be grateful for suggestions from the readers of this volume, and shall particularly welcome the receipt of stories of merit which appear during the ensuing twelvemonth in periodicals which do not come under my regular notice. Such communications may be addressed to me at *Villa Pauliska, Muralto-Locarno, Switzerland.*

E. J. O.

# INTRODUCTORY NOTE

For the benefit of readers unacquainted with the earlier volumes of this series, I repeat here a brief summary of the principles which have governed my choice of stories. I have set myself the task of disengaging the essential qualities in our contempory fiction which, when chronicled conscientiously by our literary artists, may fairly be called a criticism of life. I am not at all interested in formulæ, and organised criticism at its best would be nothing more than dead criticism, as all dogmatic interpretation of life is always dead. What has interested me, to the exclusion of other things, is the fresh, living current which flows through the best British, Irish, and Colonial work, and the psychological and imaginative reality which writers have conferred upon it.

No substance is of importance in fiction, unless it is organic substance, that is to say, substance in which the pulse of life is beating. Inorganic fiction has been our curse in the past, and bids fair to remain so, unless we exercise much greater artistic discrimination than we display at present.

The present record covers the period from June, 1928, to May, 1929, inclusive. During this period I have sought to select from the stories published in British, American, and Colonial periodicals those stories by British, Irish, and Colonial authors which have rendered life imaginatively in organic substance and artistic form. Substance is something achieved by the artist in every creation, rather than something already present, and accordingly a fact or a group of facts in a story only attains substantial embodiment when the artist's power of compelling imaginative persuasion transforms it into a living truth. The first test of a short story, therefore, in any qualitative analysis

is the measure of how vitally compelling the writer makes his selected facts or incidents. This test may be conveniently called the test of substance.

But a second test is necessary if the story is to take rank above other stories. The true artist will seek to shape this living substance into the most beautiful and satisfying form, by skilful selection and arrangement of his materials, and by the most direct and appealing presentation of it in portrayal and characterization.

I have recorded here the names of a group of stories which possess, I believe, the distinction of uniting living substance and artistic form in a closely-woven pattern with such sincerity that they are worthy of being reprinted. If all of these stories were republished they would not occupy more space than a few novels of average length. My selection of them does not imply that they are great stories. A year which produced one great story would be an exceptional one. It is simply to be taken as meaning that I have found the equivalent of a few volumes worthy of re-publication among all the stories published during the period under consideration. In compiling this book I have permitted no personal preference or prejudice consciously to influence my judgment.

Edward J. O'Brien.

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# THE BEST BRITISH SHORT STORIES OF 1929

# SOMBRERO [1]

## *By* MARTIN ARMSTRONG

From *The London Mercury*

Fiction? No, I never read fiction. I prefer facts. Give me an old diary, a ship's log, the report of a trial, and I will do my own fiction-mongering to my own taste.

The old gentleman, seated before the bright, crackling fire in his library, raised his piercing grey eyes to his two visitors.

Here, for instance—the old gentleman tapped with a long bony finger upon a book which lay on his lap—is a bound volume of *The Sporting Magazine* for the year 1810. In it, amongst a lot of information about horse-sales, notable studs, poaching, the drama, and a monthly batch of very indifferent poetry, I have come upon the minutes of a Court Martial. Now this Court Martial, with its tale of human suffering and inhuman cruelty, preserving the very words, sometimes, it seems, the very intonations, of men dead and gone these hundred years, is for me far more real, far more enthralling, than the finest fiction ever written. Read it to you? Yes, certainly I'll read it to you if you like. But you must stop me if you find it tedious. Different people have different tastes.

The Court Martial, we are told, was held on board His Majesty's Ship *Gladiator* in Portsmouth Harbour on the 5th and 6th of April, 1810, for the trial of the Honourable Warwick Lake, late Captain of the *Ulysses,* who on December the 13th, 1807, when Captain of His Majesty's sloop *Recruit,* had marooned a seaman, Robert Jeffery, on the island

[1] Copyright, 1929, by Martin Armstrong.

of Sombrero, one of those islands of the West Indies which, as I have discovered by consulting an Atlas, form the sickle-shaped eastern boundary of the Caribbean Sea. The trial opens with the evidence of Mr. Edward Spencer, late Master of His Majesty's sloop *Recruit*.

The old gentleman carefully adjusted his spectacles and began to read.

"You will be pleased to state to the Court," says the Judge-Advocate to Mr. Spencer, "what you know of the charge against Captain Lake." And Mr. Spencer begins forthwith:—

"On the 13th of December, 1807, standing to the northward and the island of Sombrero being east from the ship, distant from her about a mile and a half (which island is about five or six leagues from the Dog and Prickly Pear Island in the West Indies), Captain Lake came on deck and came to the gangway where I was standing between the hours of five and six in the afternoon, and asked: What island is this? I answered it was the island of Sombrero. Captain Lake said: Have we not some thieves on board? To which I said: Yes, there are two who have been guilty of theft. Captain Lake immediately said: Send up Jeffery here. The man soon came up. Captain Lake told him he would not keep such a fellow on his ship and that he should send him ashore. Captain Lake afterwards went up to Lieutenant Mould, 2nd Lieutenant, who was carrying on duty at the time, and spoke to him, but I did not hear what passed. In about a quarter of an hour afterwards Captain Lake said: Bear a hand and land the man, and come off. At this time Lieutenant Mould was in the boat astern as was also Robert Jeffery. From the time he was called to the gangway until I saw him pass the gangway to go into the boat, he was looking for his things, and he was called to go into the boat over the stern. I did not see the boat put off, but after she was off I heard Captain Lake hail the Lieutenant to bear a hand and land the man, and come off again. I have omitted mentioning that, before the

man was ordered into the boat, Captain Lake ordered the painter to get a piece of canvas and paint on it THIEF, which I did not see done. I was on the deck between the hours of seven and eight o'clock when the boat returned, and Jeffery was not then in the boat. The boat was hoisted up and we made sail to the northward."

There we have the whole story of Robert Jeffery. The rest of Mr. Spencer's evidence and that of the other witnesses do no more than fill in the details. But it is just this filling in of details, this gradual stoking of the fires of the imagination, that enthrals me. How little we have got, so far, beyond the bare, uncoloured facts. Just a tinge of the strange and romantic, perhaps, from that mention of the West Indies and Prickly Pear Island; just a hint of the pirate and the hangman about the Dog . . . a dog's death . . . dead as a dog; and something a little sinister about Sombrero Island as it looms up into our view like a great floating flat-topped Spanish hat. . . . Sombrero the sombre, with its echo of that melancholy French word *sombrer,—sombrer* to sink, to founder . . . sunk with all hands.

And Captain Lake as he first appears stepping towards the gangway is already something more to us than the mere outline of a man. "What island is this?" he asks. And then, with startling, with self-revealing suddenness, as though the sight of that gloomy spot had roused at once the man's vindictiveness, his inborn love of cruelty: "Have we not some thieves aboard?" But of Robert Jeffery, the doomed man, we see nothing yet but a forlorn shape. His face is hidden.

The Court now questions Mr. Spencer:

"Was there any water or provisions put into the boat that landed Robert Jeffery?"

"I did not see any, neither did I hear any ordered."

"Were his clothes put into the boat?"

"No, they were not. I saw them, the next day, I think, on board. He was dressed in a frock and trousers, not

having any hat or shoes on at the time I saw him."

Already you see, the forlorn shape grows more real. It stands before us now barefoot, hatless, dressed in a sailor's frock and trousers. You see the red, lamentable feet and the protruding ankle-bones. Rather helpless he seems, rather ill-equipped for beginning life on a lonely Atlantic rock with no water, no food, no clothes besides those he stands up in. Mr. Spencer saw the clothes next day on board, the limp and empty husks of the now-vanished Jeffery.

And in the very next sentence Captain Lake, too, takes on a sharper individuality. "On the following day," Mr. Spencer tells the Court, "I dined with Captain Lake and, just as he was rising to quit the table, Captain Lake said: I wonder how old friend Jeffery comes on now: I suppose he is got housed by this time."

He had dined and drunk well, had Captain Lake; and in his warm, postprandial state his mind turned at once to the vanished Jeffery, drawing a gusto, a relish from the contrast. How visible and audible Captain Lake has suddenly become, rising a little unsteadily from his chair, his hard blue eyes a little glazed, his face flushed to the same crimson as his lips so that his mouth appears lipless, chuckling over that joke he had played on old friend Jeffery, who by now, don't you see, after twenty-four hours, must have settled down on his bare Atlantic rock under the comfortable roofage of ten million stars. And that chuckle, perhaps, set Captain Lake a-coughing, till his blue eyes bulged like glass marbles and his lipless mouth was twisted like a ragged wound.

But now the Court grows inquisitive about the island on which Jeffery had taken up his residence.

"Are there any houses on Sombrero?" it asks Mr. Spencer.

"None!" Mr. Spencer replies. "I was on the island afterwards, on the 11th day of February, 1808. I was sent on shore by Captain Lake, accompanied by Lieutenant Mould,

to see if I could see anything of the man Jeffery, and see what sort of an island it was."

So, just two months later, you see, they are back at Sombrero. Captain Lake has grown anxious, very anxious, for reasons which will appear later, to find out something more definite about this island which, by that happy inspiration two months ago, he had, as one might say, left in sole charge of Robert Jeffery.

"I went on shore," continues Mr. Spencer, "with Lieutenant Mould in the boat, and walked over some part of the island where we found a great many eggs and young birds sitting on their nests, not capable of flying away. They are large birds, and when at full size are called noddies. We could not find any fresh water: I tasted many pools and it was all salt water that I tasted. The island was entirely barren; nothing but a kind of rough grass weed which was in the middle of the island. There was no house or inhabitant on it."

From which, you see, it is clear again that Robert Jeffery would not have much variety of food and drink during his stay on Sombrero, nor a great choice of accommodation or company: which was doubtless his reason for vanishing from the island as he had vanished from His Majesty's sloop *Recruit*, taking, as it were, a further step into the unknown. For that he did vanish is clear from what Mr. Spencer goes on to tell us.

"On the island," he continues, "I found a remnant of a pair of trousers, much torn, and a handle of a tomahawk or hatchet, which were the only things I found on the island. I did not find Jeffery there nor any traces of him, for I minutely surveyed every part of the island. It was a craggy ascent and flat when you get upon it: it is about a mile and a half in circumference. We went back to the ship at twelve o'clock according to Captain Lake's order. We were about an hour and a half at that time on the island. We brought off with us some of the eggs and young birds."

So it was not, it appears, an entirely fruitless visit: in fact we may suppose that the eggs and birds formed a welcome addition to the Captain's table, for the same afternoon they are back again, and Captain Lake with them, "and carried with us," says Mr. Spencer, "muskets and slugs to shoot the birds, and to look for the man"; thus combining business with pleasure, and both, in the case of Mr. Spencer, with a certain carelessness of syntax.

"Then it was," continues Mr. Spencer, "that we found the trousers. Lieutenant Mould and Mr. Hobson and Mr. Salmon were with us. We surveyed the island all over, taking different routes. We did not find the man nor any traces of him then. We returned about six or seven o'clock on board. Captain Lake came to the shore of the island but did not land, and returned with us on board."

Why, I wonder, did Captain Lake not land? Can it have been that some beginnings of compunction disturbed him as he approached that barren shore, so mute, so secretive of the fate of poor Jeffery, so eloquent with the reproach of his unappeasable ghost? Or was it that the Captain, corpulent and always a little unsteady on his feet and now disinclined for exertion after the midday meal (the eggs, the noddies, and no doubt the rum), mistrusted the rocks and boulders and that "craggy ascent" already referred to by Mr. Spencer? And so we see him sitting alone in the stern of the ship's boat with his cocked hat, his crimson face, and his tight breeches; portentous and a little comical.

And now the log-book of His Majesty's sloop *Recruit* is produced in Court.

"Is that," Mr. Spencer is asked, "the log-book of His Majesty's sloop *Recruit* of that time?"

"Yes," says Mr. Spencer.

"Who wrote it?"

"Mr. Jones, the Master's Mate, who is dead. He wrote it under my direction."

"Did you from time to time, as Master of the *Recruit*, examine the entries made therein?"

"I did, at different times; but I was not correct in observing every day."

"Turn to the entry of the 13th day of December, 1807, and state to the Court when you examined that entry after it was made."

"It might be several days after."

And when he did examine it, Mr. Spencer discovered a remarkable fact: namely, that Mr. Jones had set down not a word about this little business of old friend Jeffery. Ah, Mr. Jones; if only you could have waited for this Court Martial instead of hastening so inopportunely into the presence of a more awful tribunal, what might you not have told us? You might have told us what now we can never know —whether it was mere forgetfulness or a word from the Captain himself that caused you to omit that apparently insignificant detail. In either case you served your Captain well, and better still by your timely departure into the everlasting silence. But in vain; for several days later the too conscientious Mr. Spencer corrected his subordinate's omission under the date of the 13th. "Lowered down boat," Mr. Spencer added, "and landed Robert Jeffery, seaman. Seven fifty, up boat and made sail." A vital addition; and, as Mr. Spencer tells the Court, "Captain Lake did not know I made it, but the officers of the ship knew it." Can it have been at the instigation of those officers that Mr. Spencer made it, acting as it were as the rival piece on the human chessboard and out-manoeuvring the Bishop Jones or the Knight Jones of Captain Lake? That, too, is not divulged; but, however it was, the thing was duly recorded, and by this colourless Mr. Spencer, who suddenly in that act flares up into a tremendous significance, takes on the likeness of a stern-eyed recording angel writing in letters of blood and fire in the log-book of His Majesty's sloop *Recruit*.

But that is later history. "Up boat and made sail," wrote recording angel Spencer under the date of the 13th, and the *Recruit* drew away into the twilight, followed no doubt by the long gaze of Robert Jeffery from his post on the summit of Sombrero.

"What distance was the island of Sombrero from the ship next day?" asks the Court.

"In the morning, about daylight, the island bore about south-west and by west, about five or six leagues distance, being within sight."

"Are the Court to understand that, if Captain Lake had been so disposed, he might have returned to the island and taken Jeffery off?"

"Yes, I think Captain Lake might have done it."

"How was the wind?"

"About east-south-east."

But why these questions about the possibility of return to Sombrero? Captain Lake was not the man to change his mind. His heart was not likely to have softened overnight, even if his brain had cooled a little; and no doubt Jeffery on his rock knew it. No doubt he knew better than to flatter himself with idle hopes. And now, at last, our eyes are fastened more closely on this Robert Jeffery, though not on the marooned Jeffery on his rock in the empty Atlantic. There he is safe enough from our human inquisitiveness, beyond the range of any eye but the eyes of the noddies that share his desolation. But the question of the Court brings before us that earlier Jeffery of His Majesty's sloop *Recruit*, as reflected in the memory of Mr. Spencer.

"At the time when Captain Lake asked whether there were any thieves on board," demands the Court, "did you name Jeffery as one?"

"I did not mention any name."

"Do you know why Jeffery's clothes were not sent with him?"

"He did not bring them up with him, and they were not brought up before the boat shoved off. Captain Lake ordered the boat to shove off, and said: Never mind his things!"

"Did Lieuteuant Mould bring any message to Captain Lake on his return from Jeffery, expressive of his apprehension of the situation and desiring to be taken off?"

"Not that I heard."

So you took it without a word, Robert Jeffery, setting your criminal's jaw and staring straight in front of you? A hard-bitten villain, no doubt, too stubborn to beg for mercy even in that last extremity. And what was this blackguardly theft of yours for which you received such bitter punishment from good Captain Lake?

Thus Mr. Spencer describes it to the Court: "I recollect, in the month of November, 1807, he was charged with going into the gunner's cabin and taking out a bottle with some rum in it. He was punished for it by flogging him as a man. On the 13th of December following, he was charged with broaching a cask of spruce beer which had been brewed for the ship's company, for which he was not punished; but it was proved by some persons who saw him do it."

"Do you know of Jeffery's having been guilty of any other crime subsequent to the punishment he received, besides this of having broached the cask of spruce beer?"

"Not to the best of my recollection."

And so this was your crime, Robert Jeffery. You broached a cask of spruce beer. Now at least we understand what it was that roused the fury of good Captain Lake to the pitch of flinging you to starve alone on a bare Atlantic rock. Had you merely knifed one of your shipmates or blasphemed against God, doubtless you might still have been sailing the seas on board His Majesty's sloop *Recruit*. But to profane the sacred fountain of strong drink is, as you yourself must have known well, the unforgivable sin;

and the good Captain's fury, as he stands there on the gangway staring at that vast floating hat a mile and a half to the east, becomes him well.

For, as the trial proceeds, the fact emerges more and more clearly that the Captain felt very strongly on the subject. When, for example, a later witness, Thomas Jenkins, Serjeant of Marines, is asked by the Court: "Did you notice anything extraordinary in the conduct of Captain Lake at the time he sent Jeffery on shore, or did he carry on the duty in a cool, deliberate manner?" Serjeant Jenkins replies:

"He appeared to be very passionate at the time; more than usual."

And even the safe, laconic Mr. Spencer, when called a second time, cannot say that Captain Lake was perfectly calm.

"I did not consider myself a competent judge," he declares with his usual cautiousness, "but I have heard the Surgeon say that he thought he was a little touched or insane."

Yes, evidently a little touched. It hardly needed a surgeon, one would think, to tell us that; for it comes out now that, when he sent for Robert Jeffery, Captain Lake also sent for his pistols, and, Mr. Spencer goes on to say, "at the time he ordered the pistols to be brought on deck, he spoke loud and harsh." But mark this: "I think he was as much in his senses as he usually was when carrying out the duty of the ship." An important and instructive statement, this last one, more especially in the light of Mr. Spencer's final admission when pressed once more to declare whether Captain Lake was sober on the evening of the 13th of December, 1807.

"I do not think," Mr. Spencer admits, "that he was perfectly sober."

No, the Captain was evidently in an exhalted mood, and no doubt he wished to teach the rest of the crew a lesson in discipline, for according to Serjeant Jenkins, who brought

Jeffery on to the quarter-deck when Captain Lake sent for him so summarily, the Captain gave no reasons for his intention of landing Jeffery. It is even suggested, though Serjeant Jenkins is unable to corroborate it, that Captain Lake said that "if any man mentioned Jeffery he would put him to death." He was determined, you see, to have Jeffery out of sight and out of mind, especially since the crew were beginning so far to forget discipline as to show signs of sympathy with the man, muttering to one another that he would be starved to death.

But let us return to Robert Jeffery. As we listen to that part of Mr. Spencer's evidence which follows his statements about Jeffery's crime, Jeffery grows clearer to the mind's eye.

"Was Jeffery generally considered a man of bad or infamous character?" asks the Court.

"He was always," replies Mr. Spencer, "considered a skulking man, before he committed the thefts."

A skulking man, an unhappy, taciturn creature, avoiding the notice of his superiors. Surely, then, Captain Lake was doing the fellow a good turn in giving him an island all to himself in the wide Atlantic. There, at least, he could skulk to his heart's content—as soon, that is, as he got housed. A capital joke, that of Captain Lake's about old friend Jeffery getting housed. And yet, would you believe it, it was thrown away on Mr. Spencer.

"Have you any reason to think," asks the Court, "from Captain Lake's saying he supposed Jeffery had got housed, that he believed the island of Sombrero to be inhabited?"

And Mr. Spencer, good simple man, replies: "I really believe he did."

Alas, Captain; you cast your pear before a swine that day after dinner. If only Robert Jeffery could have heard you, he, no doubt, would have appreciated the humour of it. But Robert Jeffery, unhappily, was far out of earshot, dwindled to a mere speck of animated dust long leagues astern of His Majesty's sloop *Recruit*. But, sitting now at

the Court Martial and listening to Mr. Spencer's evidence, one imagines that Captain Lake was actually grateful to Mr. Spencer for his want of appreciation.

And now the Captain is allowed to put a question.

"Did you often report Jeffery to me," he asks Mr. Spencer, "as a very bad character, and say it would be a very good thing if we could get him out of the ship; that flogging would do him no good?"

"Yes," admits Mr. Spencer, "I did."

"Why," the Court enquires a little later, "had you frequently complained of Jeffery to Captain Lake and wished him out of the ship?"

"He was generally down below in the watch and could never be got on deck. He had not been long at sea: he was a very weak man and his punishments hurt him very much, and I thought such a man had better be out of the ship. I do not mean by his flogging only: he was started several times by a boatswain's mate with a rope."

There, then, is Robert Jeffery complete; a poor, weak creature who couldn't even take his punishments like a man. No floggings, no boatswain's mate with a rope-end would ever, it was to be feared, make a man of him. Undoubtedly a fellow who would be better out of the ship: Robert Jeffery himself would surely have been the first to agree to that. He was undeniably a little out of place among those burly heroes who, only two years before, had won the sea-fight off Cape Trafalgar. He would have done well, you will say, to think twice before joining the navy of His Majesty George III. And no doubt he did so think, poor chicken-livered Robert Jeffery. But thinking would not help him much, for the choice was never in his hands. The press-gang did a man's thinking and choosing for him in those days, and Jeffery had, as Captain Lake remarks towards the end of the trial, been *impressed* by the Captain himself.

And now, finding that he had misjudged Robert Jeffery, Captain Lake had, as we have seen, given him his freedom

—the freedom of an island of no less than a mile and a half in girth and of the whole Atlantic Ocean into the bargain. When the thing is considered in that light, does not good Captain Lake swell into a monster of magnanimity? The Court invites Mr. Spencer's view of the matter:

"Did you consider the act of Captain Lake as very oppressive?"

"I did not consider," replies Mr. Spencer, cautious as ever, "whether it was oppressive or not: I did not take it into consideration."

The next witness is Mr. Joseph Elvey. He adds nothing of much consequence to what Mr. Spencer has already told us, but on the subject of Captain Lake's act he presumes to hold an opinion of his own.

"Did you," asks the Court, "think it a very cruel and oppressive act at the time, the putting Jeffery on shore?"

"Yes, I did!" says Mr. Elvey.

"Was there any ship in sight at the time, or boat, when Jeffery was put on shore?"

"No!" says Mr. Elvey, a man of few words with opinions of his own.

Next comes Francisco Vala, a seaman belonging to the *Recruit*. A smallish fellow, I imagine him, dark-skinned, black-haired, and wearing gold earrings; his teeth and eyes gleaming like the white of a hard-boiled egg in the tan of his face.

The Judge-Advocate asks him: "Were you one of the boat's crew in which Robert Jeffery was taken on shore from the *Recruit* and landed on the island of Sombrero?"

"Yes, I was!" says Francisco in his quaint English. "When the boat was lowered astern, he came into the boat."

"How was he dressed?"

"He had white trousers, white frock, and a straw hat. One of the boat's crew gave him a pair of shoes and Mr. Mould gave him a handkerchief, and another man gave him a knife."

Voluble Francisco Vala: how anxious he is to talk about the

thing! He is a kindly creature of strong feelings, and the feelings must out. What most lingers in his mind, you see, is the sympathy for that poor devil whom they were rowing to his death; how one gave him a knife, another a pair of shoes, and Lieutenant Mould himself a handkerchief. They were all as powerless as Robert Jeffery himself, mere instruments of the iron will of Captain Lake. But they had asserted their common humanity as far as they could, and for a moment Robert Jeffery appears less lonely in his disaster, no longer a single castaway, but as one of the great host of the slaves of iron circumstance.

"Was the man in good spirits or was he crying?"

"He cried when he went ashore. He said, Good health, the gentlemen and the boat's crew."

They had been kind to him, you see, these instruments of his death, and Robert Jeffery wished them well.

"Did he ask them to take him on board again?"

"I did not hear him say that."

Of course not. He knew—who better?—how powerless they all were in the face of an iron destiny, that crimson, lipless face with the hard blue eyes.

"Did he immediately go up on the rock on the island?"

"Yes!"

"How high is it?"

"As high as the mizen-top."

"Was it difficult to get up?"

"No, anyone could get up."

"Did you go on shore yourself?"

"Yes, I went about twenty feet on the island."

"Was it dark at the time?"

"It was dark."

"How long was the boat on shore?"

"About a quarter of an hour."

"Did the Lieutenant and boat's crew go upon the rock to see if there were any houses?"

"Yes, and when they came down they said there were no houses."

"When you put off, did Jeffery cry?"

"Yes, but he did not make any noise."

Can you not see him, standing there barefoot at the water's edge, crying silently, as one by one the boat's crew step into the boat and the boat shoves off? And then with a despairing movement he turns from them and hastens up the "craggy ascent" on to the rock, so as to keep sight as long as possible of the departing boat and of the almost invisible shape starred with wavering lights of His Majesty's sloop *Recruit,* for four months his hated prison but now suddenly become inexpressively dear to him as his sole link with home and human kind. And you see the boat's crew and the dark shape of Lieutenant Mould in the stern, the dark swinging shapes of the men at the oars, the dribble of light from the lantern twirling and shattering on the restless water: and you hear the wet mechanic plash of the oars breaking the restless silence of the water and the heart-heavy silence of those instruments of destiny rowing back to their ruling destiny. Then the one moving light comes to rest in the cluster of fixed lights, and then "up boat and made sail," and Robert Jeffery, the small, invisible pinnacle of that invisible island, saw the cluster of lights begin to move and then gradually dissolve northwards under those colder, paler clusters in the heaven above them.

So we will leave him to his first night on Sombrero, for to think overmuch of such things chills the heart. It is more comfortable, more reassuring, in the cabin of His Majesty's Ship *Gladiator,* safe in Portsmouth Harbour, where Captain Lake is standing his trial by Court Martial and the agony of Robert Jeffery is ended these two years.

Mr. James Hobson, late acting Purser and Clerk of the *Recruit,* is called and sworn. The Judge-Advocate asks:

"Produce the muster-roll of the *Recruit,* turn to the Prisoner's name, and acquaint the Court how it there stands."

"Number 117 Ship's Book, Robert Jeffery, ordinary: entry, 11th August, 1807; appearance, 25th August; run, 13th December, 1807, at Sombrero Island."

"By whose order did you put the R," that is *run,* "against his name?"

"I believe," says Mr. Hobson, "I did it of my own accord."

Ah, Mr. Hobson, what curious coincidences of negligence occurred on His Majesty's sloop *Recruit* on the fateful 13th of December, 1807! Mr. Jones, the dead Mr. Jones the Master's Mate, forgot to record in the log-book the little incident of Robert Jeffery's expedition to Sombrero Island; and now, it seems, by a slip you put down Jeffery as *run,* that is *deserted,* instead of *discharged,* which means in this case *marooned.*

"Did Captain Lake know that you had so done?"

"When the ship arrived at Barbadoes, he asked me how he was discharged on the book. I told him I had run him on the books. He said that I ought to have discharged him to Sombrero."

"How long was that afterwards?"

"About six weeks ago."

"Did Captain Lake direct you to take out the R, and make an entry of his having been discharged to the island of Sombrero?"

"Yes."

"Why did you not do it?"

"Because I believe I sent a muster-book up previous."

"Had Captain Lake any knowledge of that muster-book having been sent away, and of the R. having remained against the name of Robert Jeffery on that book?"

"He signed the book, but he did not know that the R. was against Robert Jeffery's name at the time it was sent."

"Before you entered the R. against the name of Robert Jeffery, had you any conversation with Captain Lake as to the mode the entry should be made on the book?"

"No."

And so that small slip of Mr. Hobson's, a matter merely of one capital letter, is unexplained. Yet how curious that, after the ship had arrived at Barbadoes, Captain Lake

should suddenly have felt an interest in that trifle of past history and should have rebuked his Purser for his departure from the strict truth. Indeed one almost begins to believe, as Mr. Hobson's evidence proceeds, that the air of Barbadoes had a humanising effect on the mind of Captain Lake, for Mr. Hobson tells the Court that when the Captain learned that the island of Sombrero was uninhabited, he remarked, respecting the fate of Robert Jeffery, that "he was very sorry it had happened: he would rather have given twenty thousand pounds."

That is handsome enough, in all conscience. Twenty thousand pounds to revoke the fate of a common seaman! Yes, Robert Jeffery: if only you could have known it, you had a generous friend in Captain Lake when the humanising airs of Barbadoes had got to work on him. Already we find ourselves relenting towards the Captain. The brutality, the cruel sensuality fade out of his crimson face; those hard blue eyes soften and grow kind. We are on the point of stretching out our hands to the repentant sinner when, in one cynical and concluding phrase, Mr. Hobson hurls his Captain back into the pit of infamy.

"This," all innocently concludes Mr. Hobson, "was after he had been to the Admiral at Barbadoes."

What a visit, Captain Lake, that visit to your Admiral must have been! The log-book and the muster-roll had, it seems, preceded you and that curious discrepancy between them under the date of December the 13th must have caught the Admiral's watchful eye, or perhaps his attention was drawn to it by a subordinate.

Thus, when Captain Lake enters the Admiral's cabin, he finds him, no doubt, turning over the pages of those two accursed books. The Captain is struck at once by the coldness of his Admiral's welcome.

"I find, Captain Lake," we imagine the Admiral saying, "that on your muster-roll here, a certain seaman, Robert Jeffery, is discharged as *run* on the 13th of December, off Sombrero Island."

"Yes, Sir."

"You were lying, it seems, about a mile and a half off the island."

"About that distance, Sir."

"So that this Robert Jeffery must have swum, or hoped to have swum, a mile and a half to shore?"

"I presume so, Sir."

"Do you indeed so presume?"

Captain Lake does not reply. He wears a look of discomfort, of misgiving, as though recalling some disagreeable incident long since dismissed.

"Come, Captain Lake," says the Admiral, "let me refresh your memory. I turn to the log-book and find, under the same date, that you considerately saved this Robert Jeffery the trouble of his swim by setting a ship's boat and crew at his disposal. Do you generally offer this convenience to those of your crew who may desire to run?"

Sir Alexander Cochrane—I picture him very upright, gaunt, collected—looks sharply at Captain Lake. But a startling change has come over the portly Captain. His crimson face has blenched to a purplish grey; his mouth is drawn like the mouth of a sick man; it appears that he is about to take a fit. . . .

After some such fashion, one imagines, did that disagreeable interview open. But of what actually passed we are left in ignorance, and apart from the recorded fact that the Admiral packed Captain Lake back post-haste to Sombrero to search for the lost Jeffery, the only glimpse into the interview we are permitted is furnished by the Captain himself in his defence before the Court; namely that the Admiral "did, agreeably to the feelings of his honourable character, inquire into, adjudge, and punish me on the occasion, for I was seriously admonished by him; and what but punishment can that be to a feeling, manly, and honourable mind?"

Punishment indeed, Captain! A punishment more cruel to one of your sensitive disposition than mere abandonment on a desert island could ever have been to a common sea-

man. Your statement that you would rather have given twenty thousand pounds allows us to gauge very accurately the depth of the wound to your feeling, manly, and honourable mind. Still, twenty thousand would not perhaps have been an excessive figure if thereby you could have bought off that exceedingly disagreeable interview with Sir Alexander Cochrane and the still more disagreeable, and as yet unforeseen, Court Martial which was to follow two years later. But it would have been cheaper, surely, to have controlled your very proper feelings that evening off Sombrero, and even to have defeated the ends of justice and discipline at least to the point of punishing mildly that horrible crime of Robert Jeffery's.

Captain Lake must have told himself as much a hundred times during his declining years. For that small fact written down in the *Recruit's* log-book under December the 13th 1807, by recording angel Spencer, had not contented itself with warming for a moment at the touch of Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane. After a sleep of weeks and months, nay even of years, it begins to stir again, uncoils itself, rears its thin, spiteful head, retracts itself cobra-like to strike at the portly Captain Lake who doubtless by that time had almost forgotten old friend Jeffery and that wretched floating hat of an island so far from the comfortable shores of England; yes, even that interview with the Admiral, so painful to a feeling, manly, and honourable mind.

In plain words, rumour of the affair crawls slowly eastwards, crawls at last to the shores of England, crawls to the ear of a Member of Parliament, and the question is raised in the House, the matter investigated, and a Court Martial ordered. What a lesson, Captain! What a vindication of the Christian advice to love your neighbour as yourself; for if you don't, the advice ought to have gone on to point out, the result of your behaviour, though long buried in the past, may stir itself like a snake warmed by the returning summer, and slide silently along the years into the grass about your door-step, and there Lamia-like be changed; and Robert

Jeffery comes back to life, greets you at your own hearth, follows you, an inseparable companion, for the rest of your days, barefoot, sunken-faced, in trousers, frock, and that garment of canvas which you so thoughtfully and ingeniously designed for him, with the word THIEF painted upon it.

"The Court was cleared," concludes the article in *The Sporting Magazine,* "and agreed that the charges had been proved against the said Honourable Warwick Lake, and did adjudge him to be dismissed from His Majesty's service. The Court was again opened and the prisoner brought in, audience admitted, and the sentence passed accordingly."

# WHESSOE [1]

*By* NUGENT BARKER

From *Life and Letters*

Those who had seen him, those who had endeavoured to speak with him, face to face, until suddenly they had realized that it would be ridiculous to carry the conversation further—these people searched diligently among the proper sources, and called him Whessoe. It may be that there was more than the merest ghost of a reason for such a name. Yet he was so secret, so elusive, they could not be sure.

His habitation was a great, silent, early Victorian house, and it stood on a semi-circle of drive behind two gates that swung rheumatically on their creaky hinges, off the leafiest avenue of that old watering-town. There are many such houses, sunk in sleep, on the verdured, lazy borders of Chelsover. Their emptiness of all sound save the frequent mutter of raindrops from the eaves; the filmy stare of their windows; their endless, aimless hours—these things give them the air of old querulous people who have found no benefit in the health-giving waters of Chelsover, but have sat themselves down within sight of that hope-shattering spa, to watch others pass by them on the same misguided errand, beneath the whispering trees. Especially the two gates were two old snuffy gentlemen, who wheezed, and croaked, and told doubtful stories, whenever any one took them for a moment by the latches, and walked, with silent footsteps, up the lichened drive, to the old house where the old man lived.

They say that he wore knee-breeches, and that, whenever

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he took his walks abroad, a threadbare, plum-coloured surtout, with the tightest of waists, and a whole battalion of buttons, glowed like a dying smithy amidst the leaf-shadows. But Whessoe of Two Gates walked so rarely in the day-time, and seldom beyond the confines of his house: the night was his, and the very early morning, when the moon, shining into an open upper window, brightened the gleam of his eye and darkened the lines on his face.

Then would certain belated residents of Chelsover, lifting their heads, gaze fearfully at the old man lurking there.

Those of them that knew his story. . . . Yet they never ceased to wonder, when that strange figure met their eyes. They wondered at the truth of many tales concerning him; they wondered at the relentless spirit that would not let him sleep. There were occasions when he was not to be seen at his accustomed vigil; times when these same residents peered anxiously over the lower windows, to catch the fleeting glimpses of his ghostly figure as it wandered from room to room. It was so white, so frail, it shone so queerly in the dark passages and the half-light of the hall. Sometimes, when he caught sight of himself in the dusky, all but invisible, depths and boundaries of a mirror, Whessoe, too, would start and shudder at the spectral shape that had confronted him there. His face was as white and crumpled as a ball of paper; his shrunken legs appeared as though they might drop at any moment from the loosely buckled ends of his knee-breeches; his knuckles were as big as buttons—as big as the buttons on his plum-coloured surtout. But the contemplation of this disturbing figure seldom held him for long; soon he would be through with the ghost-gazing, would be off again upon his nocturnal rambles, drifting and gliding, watching at the window, caring for no man, a shadow of fled glories passing through the house.

And as silently as Whessoe, the years passed too; time was long in bringing change to the sombre mansion; and the dread invasion, when it *did* come, came neither very suddenly nor very gradually: it seemed to slip into his life

like a visitor who had hailed him before opening the door: it seemed, perhaps, even more vividly, to have slipped out from a world that had nothing whatever to do with his own . . . a world with a dry mouth, and a grizzly tongue in its cheek, that caused him rather frantically to think of ghosts.

Ghosts in the old house! Ghosts within the gates! Impossible, thought the old man restlessly—yet in the same moment realized that the signs had come, and he had not heeded them. For a week, a month, the visitor had hailed, and Whessoe had not attempted to open the door. Surely they were incontestable, those once unmeaning events that suddenly he remembered one very early April morning in the shuttered drawing-room, where his eyes were opened by a sign which in its own turn was a prelude to a greater sign in store!

An odour had reached him, a sweet, ineffable odour that seemed to wrap his frail body in kindly, pleading voices of the Past; he fancied that a window must be open and a shutter unlatched; but he knew that no flowers grew now in the unwalked wilderness of a garden, nor was there any scent in the sycamore tree whose topmost branches fell barely short of his bedroom window-sill. The incident had disturbed him, without giving cause for any particular fear in his awakening mind; but some time later, when he had left the drawing-room, and was moving noiselessly across the black spaces of the hall, a sound had started at his elbow, a tiny catch of the breath, as though—ah, yes—a ghost had sighed—and he had fled in a high frenzy up the staircase, to fashion the moonbeams of his bedroom into the forms and murmurs of ghosts. The moon left his window, and went her way; but still he sat on, round-eyed, probing shadows of the immediate past.

A week, a month ago, the signs had come, and he had not heeded them! A vague hint of *preparation*—he could not define it exactly—in rooms, and hall, and passages; a brighter, cleaner atmosphere, even at midnight, that seemed

to envelop him at every turn of the stair—these were the little things, scarcely felt in the hour of their happening, that jumped to his memory now, and kept him vigilant for many weeks to come. Sleeping by day, and walking by night, his long-established mode of living was highly favourable to a proper study of ghosts. He would sit in the great lofty bedroom whose windows looked over the sycamore tree: he would sit there very silently, with the door a little open, hoping for the arrival of those invading spirits whose voices he dreaded to hear.

It was a faded, murky room, that in which the crowning evidence of a supernatural world had come to him at last. The bed stood out like a draped coffin on a bier; heavy curtains hid the two tall grimy windows that might have been the black mouths of tombs. One of these windows had been open, and the curtains parted, on the night when he heard the spectral cry. The sound had awakened him; and for many moments afterwards he fancied that he could hear the whistle of the wind. But the cord of the window-blind hung motionless in the still night air; nothing stirred in that vast tomb behind two parted curtains; and suddenly he knew that the sound was coming from within the house: that in some distant room a ghostly company was dancing, to a quiver of spectral music, and a riot of fitful, elfin laughter.

Trembling in every limb, old Whessoe flung off the bedclothes and hurried to the door. But the lock was rusty, and the key refused to turn in his nerveless fingers. He went to the window, peeped down into the garden and up into the sky; he was scared, he was shaking, he wanted to hide the tempestuous music that danced in his ears. A sickle moon was rising above the avenue that led into Chelsover: already, through the mesh of distant leaves, she had begun to sprinkle her dust on to the sleepy head of the sycamore tree. And now a cool wind blew into the old man's face, and the far-distant shunting of a train told him that his usual hour for rising was near. But this time he did

not rise. Instead, he lay again beneath the bedclothes, with fingers pressed into his ears, and the sheets pulled over his thin, grey hair; and at intervals throughout the night, in his waking moments, and in his troubled dreams, he heard the company of ghosts, and the flying music, and the distant room, and the whole house, dancing and dancing. . . .

So the ghosts came, and Whessoe knew now that the manifestations were something more real than the vague voices of house and garden. He did not hear them on the following night. A week went by, and the heart of the house was wrapped in silence. His first thought was to locate the room of the riotous dancing: he fancied it must be the drawing-room; but when at last he ventured within it, no sign of the dancing was there. His heart thumped as he glided, silent as a shadow, across the moonlit floor. But again the odour assailed him, subtle and frightening, speaking to him in voices of the Past. Old Whessoe caught his breath. So they were here always, now. In every crack and corner, watching him, watching him, never to go. He was able no longer to think of the house as his own.

When they came again, he was ready for them. He was sitting in his room with the door open, ready and waiting, dressed in the plum-coloured surtout and loose knee-breeches of a bygone year; and they began their display by creaking the stairs, and uttering little outbursts of laughter, until presently all individual sounds were swallowed in the dance. The music swirled, the voices rose and fell, the house rocked as before; and Whessoe stood in his doorway, round-eyed and with his mouth pursed as for whistling, trying to summon up courage to obey the almost articulate voices that he fancied he could hear, at odd moments, calling to him to join them.

Thenceforth, the wild, elfin music of the ghosts became an established custom in that house. Whessoe would await it in fear; but the fear was changed into a momentary wonder when the first gay notes arrived. He did not hear it every night. Often a whole week would go by, and the

long, early hours of the morning brought no sign. He would sit in the great, lofty bedroom whose windows looked over the sycamore tree: he would sit there very silently, with the door a little open, hoping for the return of those invading spirits whose voices he dreaded to hear. And when they came, and the wrinkled cheeks of the house were smoothed out with the great burst of music, always the first fear would creep back into Whessoe: and it was many weeks before he ventured beyond the doorway while the ghosts danced.

But as time brought less restraint to the ghostly visitors, so also it brought a sense of boldness to Whessoe. The anxiety of waiting for their return was lessened by these shortening intervals of silence; his first horror began to depart; and he found himself looking forward with increasing pleasure to those nights when music tossed above the whistle of the wind, and the wind tossed over the trees, calling his name:

"Whes-s-s-oe! Whes-s-s-oe!"

At first he was scared, sitting there, unable to tell the fancied voice from the real; then, from the wild elements of nature, he began to separate the wild elements of the house—the one became a stepping-stone to the other—and when at last he realized that a spirit world was taking possession of the old building, superimposing itself upon everything within it, creeping into every crack and cranny, usurping the house's soul, Whessoe was not afraid. He felt soothed, and strangely gratified at so much ghostly attention. He became quietly interested, and began to think.

"What are these phantoms like?" he thought, and strove to picture them. He wondered whether they walked in the day-time, and whether they could be seen outside the realms of darkness; from his scanty knowledge of the way of ghosts, he decided these two questions in the negative. And sometimes, in his cunning way, he tried to catch their tunes. . . . Tunes that had stolen into his heart, that were filling his nights with pleasure, that bid him leave their singers unmolested because they were as lovely as the shy songs of

birds. And although there were moments when his curiosity urged him to put the phantoms to the proof in the broad light of day, yet always he remained loyal to the songs' bidding; but as the weeks passed, there came a more daring note to his nightly vigils.

There was a cracked, spare piano which in old days had been relegated to some dim room on the drawing-room floor; and one early morning, when the singing and the dancing were over and the house was quiet, Whessoe stole down and seated himself in front of the instrument; and there, in the darkness, with notes that came softly at first and finally filled the whole house with song, he, as though to pay back the ghosts in their own ghostly coin, played many bars of his favourite *Lucia*.

When August came, and the thick trees of Chelsover lay like a dust-sheet over the town, the spirits kept away; and the old house slept dreamlessly with its head upon its arm. Whessoe was puzzled. He who once had known and welcomed solitude, fretted when he found it again. The round mouth of the night drew near him and pressed its soundless, thick lips to his ear; the empty corners stared back at him with tightly lidded eyes. But such a state did not exist for long: the ghostly period had been of too short a duration to have become a necessity for his soul. On the approach of September, his feelings suffered a certain change. Whenever the wind sang, he did not hesitate any longer to attribute the singing to the wind; and it sang to him in warning tones that told him that the ghosts' music had been rather monstrously evil. He was not ignorant of such a popular opinion in regard to ghostly phenomena, and his bald head nodded sagely as he wandered from room to room. That strange air of preparation—that freshness in the rooms and passages—a sense of wings flying down the well of the staircase and beating the whole cubical atmosphere of the hall—these facts that had disturbed his solitude as far back as the previous December spoke to him now of the evil nature of ghosts. To minds far less fanciful than

his, the creatures might have seemed the more terrible because they had arisen from renovation and progress, and not from decay. He visualized a kind of perverted fungus, growing more readily in sweet and dry places of the earth. And when he saw it like this, he shivered in the surtout and rattled at the knees.

He wanted very earnestly to stamp out the evil. Therefore one morning, when the moon was still shining, and the whole world of Chelsover lay asleep, Whessoe crept down to the vast, shutterless library, and began to write. . . . He wrote long and laboriously, and without a pause; he wrote until the room grew cold and a breeze sighed, and shadows stretched sleepily in the couch of the garden just before dawn. It was late, very late in the day for Whessoe, with his crumpled face losing all its lines in the soft half-light, his shrunken body merging into the dark pit of the chair; and the old man put away the pen. But on the next evening he rose before midnight and finished his letter; and his buckled shoes went noislessly up the lichened drive.

The gate coughed and wheezed on its rusty hinges; the arched avenue beyond rained countless spears of moonlight and shadow. Screwing up his eyes, he saw that this road into Chelsover was not deserted. A figure stood by the far-distant pillar-box, a postman, collecting letters in the light of a lamp.

Whessoe hallooed at him, and began to run.

"Hi-yi-yi!" But his rather thin, high voice trailed off dismally into the silence. "Hi-yi-yi!" he called. Perhaps it was difficult for people to see his spare figure amid the spears of moonlight and shadow.

"Ahoy-y-y!" shouted Whessoe again, but the postman did not hear. The fellow shouldered his bag and bustled away; and the plum-coloured surtout and faded knee-breeches moved slowly in the direction of the pillar-box. There was no need to hurry now, there was no need at all. . . . But there had been no need to hurry at any time

during the whole hard business of the letter-writing. Although he waited many days, Whessoe received no answer: nobody answered the letter that he had written to the Society for Psychical Research, at immense pains, on two sheets of notepaper, craving help.

Near the end of September the equinoctial gales set in, and the dark, cavernous avenue rocked its high head, and buried its feet in a spatter of autumn leaves. And the passing residents of Chelsover stopped in their walk with a renewed wonder, lifting their eyes towards an open upper window into which the moon was shining, and muttering in their hearts, "there's that Whessoe again."

There's that strange Whessoe, as white as a sheet, crouching at the window while the winds cry *Whessoe!* The spirit is gone from the old man now. A terrible weariness is within him, left by long weeks of waiting for a letter that has not come; and anger, too deep to raise a murmur in the shrunken body, is there; and hope is near dying, and will be quite dead soon, a dead thing drifting in the wake of the Past when a few more nights have run, and Whessoe has spent his final hours of sitting in the library until the day has broken, peering over long shelves, poring over old books in the still moonshine, hunting for some record of a riddle that he is unable to solve. And always the weariness and the anger are nourished by a return of that tremendous solitude whose embracing arms seem stronger now because he can hear the ghosts' music again. Soaring, whirling, thumping, flying, the phantom tunes are crowding his nights with a fresh fury, and Whessoe sits in his room, ignored. Hell is summoning its powers to drive him away, yet all its energies are concentrated on the house. The entity of the whole place is being usurped, its blood is being sapped, the spirits of evil are taking possession, there will be no house of his in Chelsover soon. . . .

The leaves of the sycamore shiver against the moon. But the shadow in the old man's mind is deeper than the

shadows of the leaves that twist, and twirl, and mould a myriad jests, the whole night long, upon the staring face.

* * * *

Near the dawn of a day in late October, Whessoe found the book for which he had been searching. It was big and heavy, and time had steeped it in a musty odour and on its front and side, in golden lettering, these words were seen: *The Chelsover Chronicles.*

He opened it thoughtfully, peered into its pages, then, with a certain impish action, weighed it in his hand. A bulky book, a book that required much time for reading. Ho, ho! Utterly foolish to read it here, where at any moment the ghostly crowd might break in upon his studies! So he glided noiselessly up the staircase, with the great book tucked beneath his arm.

As soon as he had entered his bedroom, he pulled up a chair, and began to read. But the windows were closed, and the thick curtains were drawn; and the wind soothed him with its subdued thunders, so that after a time he could not keep from nodding. And, because he had not found the information that he wanted, he crept into bed, and there fell asleep.

He awoke some hours later, tired and uneasy; all through his slumbers he had been haunted by the persistent knowlege that he must continue to read. He listened: and thought that he could hear shrill voices out on the old road to Chelsover—boys' whistling voices—and sometimes the clatter of cartwheels, behind the heavy curtains. It occurred to him mildly that daylight was come. But the great book lay on a little table at his bedside; he stretched out an arm, and took up the heavy volume, resting it against his propped knees.

An hour passed, and Whessoe discovered the secret of Two Gates. The print was small, on a leaf stained yellow with age; nevertheless, he was able to read it easily with his tiny, staring eyes:

". . . to conclude this chapter in the Chronicles of Chelsover, in the history of the Environments and of the Approaches, with the name of one Sylvester Whessoe, Colonel of Artillery, who, on his retirement from the thunders of the battlefield, spent the remainder of his years in the seclusion of his Ancestral Home. Doubtless the event would have been of little interest to my readers——"

He looked up suddenly, straining his ears. Voices were coming up the stairs—*their* voices, the ghostly voices, talking and laughing——

Sylvester Whessoe read on:

"—had not the aged Colonel died rather suddenly, though not very violently, by means of his own hand. A gentle dose of chloroform, taken in the silence of the night——"

They were coming now. The ghosts—the ghosts—they were nearing the door. . . . He took the book under the bedclothes, and pulled the sheets over his head, and still he read on——

". . . taken in the silence of the night. . . ."

* * * *

The door opened, and a girl's voice came into the room.

"Oh, dear!" it cried, "how pitch dark it is!"

Quick young feet walked across the floor. "If you *must* sleep here—" said the voice. The curtains swished back, and the blinds tore up, and the vast, old room was flooded with the afternoon light. She turned to her visitor with laughing eyes.

"You brave, brave man! Yes! This is our haunted room —the room where our poor ghost lives. Of course, I've never seen him, but so I am told." She laughed, a long laugh of silver that ran round the room. "The bed's too terribly comfy, they say."

She shuddered a little comically as she approached it.

"Behold our famous bed!" She flung back the bedclothes, piling them up.

On the empty cold sheet lay a heavy book, thickly coated in dust that was disturbed but slightly where the sheets had brushed it. And when she saw it lying there, her laugh went, and her heart stopped, and she stood as white as a ghost.

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# THE CHILD[1]

*By* H. E. BATES

From *The Criterion*

In colour the sea was of the grey-green of a thistle-leaf in summer, though sometimes were revealed patches of dull violet, brief, evanescent patches that were without the dancing white veins of the rest of the sea. In the foreground, on the pale-red shore, the green and voilet and white merged into long lines of miniature breakers that kept up a soft thunder.

A row of bathing-tents between the cliffs and the waves were striped red and white. Up on the little yellow cliff the sunblinds of the house were barred red and white too. A faint wind came with the sun—wind that blew out the tamarisk foliage as it would feathers and mingled softly the scent of sea and greenness and shore.

Lazily the wind flapped at the awning of the window where the child stood. The child was perching on a stool and the stool had been set on two volumes of the *Encyclopædia Britannica,* so that the child could survey the world.

From the window could be seen the whole sweep of the sea, the green and white and voilet, with a thin strip of the pale beaten shore. Watching it the child had ecstatic moments when the stool swayed like the tamarisks in the wind.

"Oh! Lord!" the child would murmur.

Long ago the architect of the house had inserted into the window panes of scarlet and yellow and blue. Blue squares filled the corners. Yellow oblongs united the

[1] Copyright, 1929, by H. E. Bates.

squares. The middle had been left a pool of vivid blood. Now the child could look out on a world more evanescent and startling in colour than ever the sea could be. Leaning forward it saw sea and rocks and sky as if washed in bloody rain; it detected and became excited at a red man escorting a red lady towards, into and finally under a red sea; lastly it saw red boats darting hither and thither like red flies between a red shore and the dark, thunderously red line of sky.

On growing tired of a crimson world it could, by magic twists, discover a blue, in which foliage, cliffs, bathers, sea and shore would look dyed like a royal robe; so that in the garden between itself and the sea sprang forth blue pagodas, blue lawns, blue discs and trumpets of silent blue, all of a brilliant, prepossessing beauty.

Through the red pane the world appeared even in its beauty a little forbidding and dangerous, for the sea appeared always to be about to drown bathers and mariners. Through the blue glass it resembled a painted picture and the figures that walked from the bathing-huts to the sea were queens and kings.

Gazing through them the child clutched its frock, tip-toed on the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and murmured again:

"Oh! Lord!"

But it had no words for the scene through the yellow pane. There the world was softened and quietened; between sky and shore hung some ripe day. The sea was a yellow pond, and in colour the sky was somewhere between the hue of a lemon and an autumn pear. Some tall grass, waving on the cliff's edge, was like turning corn and the bathing-huts below appeared suddenly like big lacquered carriages that had brought Chinese ladies and gentlemen to be washed in the sea.

Lazily a yellow gull dipped from the cliff to the waves. The child made precarious bends in order to watch it, wishing it would fly upwards and sun its back on the

yellow sill. At the same time Volume One of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* slipped a little from under its feet.

The child had still no words. In texture, warmth and hue the day beyond the yellow pane seemed to ripen. The pane itself was warm, like a sunny petal, and the garden a lemon wilderness. With a start the child saw itself beyond the petal and the wilderness, dipping its feet into the soft yellow sea.

Then the child saw a party of bathers running pell-mell towards the sea. They appeared slightly ridiculous, but interesting, for side by side with skinny decrepit men ran immense, magnificently bosomed women holding each other's hands. Some danced, some hopped miserably between stone and stone, others made splendid efforts to run straight into the sea. They were all yellow in colour and might have been gigantic wasps except that they shouted as they ran.

The child pressed on the yellow glass. Not all the bathers had yet reached the sea. And some who had arrived had paused on the edge and were bending forward to touch it, as if it had been a bank of yellow flowers.

Tiptoeing the child watched carefully the fat and thin, the more athletic and the wary, as they approached the sea. Every moment the day and the sea seemed softer and riper. The bathers were steeped in sun.

Finally the child saw that only two bathers remained on the shore. One was a fat woman who, with legs apart and arms spread out like wings, was about to push an aged, thin-legged gentleman into the yellow waves. The woman pushed and struggled. All the other bathers appeared to be shouting and laughing. The thin man, waving his arms, made mock shudders and protests.

Suddenly, as if taken unawares, he joined the chaos of dancing yellow shoulders, yellow heads and ripe, yellow breasts with a splash and a shout.

Immediately all the world appeared to be gaily splashing and shouting.

Through the yellow pane the child saw all this as a picture of entrancement and delight. And it longed suddenly to emulate it, even if not to be part of it all. This longing it fulfilled at once by making swimming motions with its arms, its neck craned forward, one foot occasionally swinging free of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. It swam lustily, not moving an inch. The room was full of the confused sounds of blowings and splashings and imaginarily breasted waves.

Suddenly the child tired of it all. Down in the yellow ocean was such splashing and breasting and swimming as it could never hope to attain. There the fat women were wallowing like yellow fish. For a distance of a hundred yards outward yellow heads danced in and out of view.

The child suddenly ceased its own imaginary swimming, stood still, and watched greedily.

Its longing to be part of the ripe, lemon-coloured, pear-coloured day grew greater. Its eyes grew fiercely and intensely wonderous with what it saw.

Of a sudden its hands were at its clothes. Buttons suddenly ripped away from their holes, bows flew undone and the child slid away from the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and the yellow pane. Over the child's head slipped a dress and a petticoat, like skins, and a pair of little blue drawers fell noiselessly to her feet, draping the books and the stool.

Through the window the day now appeared like a strange, perfectly made jig-saw puzzle of red and yellow and blue.

Soft lights fell suddenly over the naked breasts, arms and shoulders of the child. The child made no sound in the passage to the door. And on the landing and the stairs there was no sound either except of a blue fly buzzing in some sunny pane.

The stairs let the naked feet pass without a creak; the air took the child's excited, expectant breath and hushed it.

Running among the trees and flowers that had once appeared like blue pagodas and trumpets the child felt an immense elation. Her eyes were dazzled; she still saw the sea as a yellow pond, and the bathing-huts as lacquered carriages that had brought Chinese ladies and gentlemen to be washed in the sea.

She ran on. The sun was hot, the wind gentle, kissing her pink body as it kissed the tamarisk and the sea. She flaunted and swayed her body as she ran.

Descending the steps of the cliff she came within reach of the sea. The bathers were still struggling with the waves and themselves, splashing the sea upward in silver-green bows.

Pausing, the child held her hands to her own unripened breast and watched greedily again. She could feel her heart beating; the beat was like the noise of the gently thunderous sea.

She ran suddenly forward to where the dancing shapes, the fat and thin, the more athletic and the wary, were rolling their old, white, misshapen, ill-kept, would-be seductive and repulsive bodies like hoary seals in the sun. As she ran forward she made little jubilant noises and waved her hands.

She came to within twenty feet of the sea.

Suddenly all the women and the men stood up in the water. They stared, gasped and dashed the water from their flabby eyes. The sea-drops glistened and dripped from their bedraggled limbs. And suddenly, as if ashamed of something, they all strode forward in the water, waving their fat and thin and pallid arms, gesticulating forbiddingly, making noises of horror and shame.

"Go back! Go back!" they shouted to the naked child. "Go back!"

They shouted and shouted.

But towards the sea that with its rolling yellow breast had appeared the very emblem of some bright, entrancing day, the child in its loveliness ran on.

# THE MAN WHO MISSED THE 'BUS [1]

*By* STELLA BENSON

From *The Fortnightly Review* and *Harper's Magazine*

Mr. Robinson's temper was quite sore by the time he reached St. Pierre. The two irritations that most surely found the weak places in his nervous defenses were noise and light in his eyes. And, as he told Monsieur Dupont, the proprietor of Les Trois Moineaux at St. Pierre, "If there is one thing, monsieur, that is offensive—essentially offensive—that is to say, a danger in itself—I mean to say noise doesn't have to have a meaning. . . . What I mean is, monsieur, that noise——"

"*Numéro trente*," said Monsieur Dupont to the chasseur.

Mr. Robinson always had to explain things very thoroughly in order to make people really appreciate the force of what he had to say; and even then it was a hard task to get them to acknowledge receipt, so to speak, of his message. But he was a humble man, and he accounted for the atmosphere of unanswered and unfinished remarks in which he lived by admitting that his words were unfortunately always inadequate to convey to a fellow-mortal the intense interest to be found in the curiosities of behavior and sensation. His mind was overstocked with by-products of the business of life. He felt that every moment disclosed a new thing worth thinking of among the phenomena that his senses presented to him. Other people, he saw, let these phenomenal moments slip by unanalyzed; but if he had had the words and the courage,

[1] Copyright, 1929, by Harper & Brothers. Copyright, 1929, by Stella O'Gorman Anderson.

he felt, he could have awakened those of his fellow-creatures whom he met from their trance of shallow living. As it was, the relation of his explorations and wonderings sounded, even to his own ears, flat as the telling at breakfast of an ecstatic dream.

What he had meant to say about noise, for instance, had been that noise was *in itself* terrifying and horrible —not as a warning of danger but as a physical assault. Vulgar people treat noise only as a language that *means* something, he would have said, but really noise could not be translated, any more than rape could be translated. There was no such thing as an ugly harmless noise. The noise of an express train approaching and shrieking through a quiet station; the noise of heavy rain sweeping towards one through a forest; the noise of loud concerted laughter at an unheard joke—all benevolent noises if translated into concrete terms, were *in themselves* calamities. All this Mr. Robinson would have thought worth saying to Monsieur Dupont—worth continuing to say until Monsieur Dupont should have confessed to an understanding of his meaning; but as usual the words collapsed as soon as they left Mr. Robinson's lips.

Monsieur Dupont stood in the doorway of Les Trois Moineaux with his back to the light. Mr. Robinson could see the shape of his head set on stooping shoulders, with a little frail fluff of hair beaming round a baldness. He could see the rather crumpled ears with outleaning lobes bulging sharply against the light. But between ear and ear, between bald brow and breast he could see nothing but a black blank against the glare. Mr. Robinson had extremely acute sight—perhaps too acute, as he often wanted to tell people, since this was perhaps why the light in his eyes affected him so painfully.

"If my sight were less acute," he would have said, "I should not mind a glare so much—I mean to say, my eyes are so extremely receptive that they receive too much,

or in other words the same cause that makes my eyes so very sensitive is . . ."

But nobody ever leaned forward eagerly and said, "I understand you perfectly, Mr. Robinson, and what you say is most interesting. Your sight includes so much that it cannot exclude excessive light, and this very naturally irritates your nerves, though the same peculiarity accounts for your intense powers of observation." Nobody ever said anything like that, but then, people are so self-engrossed.

Mr. Robinson was not self-engrossed—he was simply extravagantly interested in *things*, not people. For instance, he looked round now, as the chasseur sought in the shadows for his suitcase, and saw the terrace striped by long beams of light—broad flat beams that were strung like yellow sheets from every window and door in the hotel to the trees, tall urns, and tables of the terrace. A murmur of voices enlivened the air, but there were no human creatures in any beam—only blocked dark figures in the shadows—and, in every patch of light, a sleeping dog or cat or two. Dogs and cats lay extended or curled comfortably on the warm uneven paving stones, and Mr. Robinson's perfect sight absorbed the shape of every brown, tortoise-shell, or black marking on their bodies, as a geographer might accept the continents on a new unheard-of globe.

"It's just like geography—the markings on animals," Mr. Robinson had once said to an American who couldn't get away. "What I mean to say is that the markings on a dog or a rabbit have just as much sense as the markings on this world of ours—or in other words the archipelagoes of spots on this pointer puppy are just as importantly isolated from one another as they could be in any Adriatic sea."

But the American had only replied, "Why no, Mr. Robinson, not half so important; I am taking my wife, with the aid of the American Express Company, to visit the Greek

islands this summer; and we shall be sick on the sea and robbed on the land—whereas nobody but a flea ever visits the spots on that puppy, and the flea don't know and don't care a damn what color he bites into." Showing that nobody except Mr. Robinson ever really studied things impersonally.

Mr. Robinson, a very ingenious-minded and sensitive man with plenty of money, was always seeking new places to go to, where he might be a success—or rather, where his unaccountable failures elsewhere might not be known. St. Pierre, he thought, was an excellent venture, although the approach to it had been so trying. As soon as he had heard of it—through reading a short thoughtless sketch by a popular novelist in the *Daily Call*—he had felt hopeful about it. A little Provençal walled town on a hill, looking out over vineyards to the blue Mediterranean; a perfect little hotel—clean and with a wonderful cook—frequented by an interesting few. . . .

"By the time I get downstairs," thought Mr. Robinson as he carefully laid his trousers under the mattress in his room and donned another pair, "the lights will be lighted on the terrace, and I shall be able to see my future friends. I must tell someone about that curious broken reflection in the river Rhone."

He went downstairs and out onto the terrace, where the tinkle of glasses and plates made him feel hungry. He could hear, as he stood in the doorway looking out, one man's voice making a series of jokes in quick succession, each excited pause in his voice being filled by a gust and scrape of general laughter—like waves breaking on a beach with a clatter and then recoiling with a thin, hopeful, lonely sound. "Probably all his jokes are personalities," thought Mr. Robinson, "and, therefore, not essentially funny. No doubt they are slightly pornographic, at that. When will people learn how interesting and exciting *things* are? . . ."

A waiter behind him drew out a chair from a table

in one of the squares of light thrown from a window. Mr. Robinson, after sitting down abstractedly, was just going to call the waiter back to tell him that his eyes were ultra-sensitive to light and that he could see nothing in that glare, when a large dog, with the bleached, patched, innocent face of a circus clown, came and laid its head on his knee. Mr. Robinson could never bear to disappoint an animal. He attributed to animals all the hot and cold variations of feeling that he himself habitually experienced, identifying the complacent fur of the brute with his own thin human skin. So that when the waiter, coming quietly behind him, put the wine list into his hand, Mr. Robinson merely said, "Thank you, garçon, but I never touch alcohol in any form—or, for the matter of that, tobacco either. In my opinion—" and did not call the rapidly escaping waiter back to ask him to move his table. The dog's chin was now comfortably pressed against his knee, and the dog's paw hooked in a pathetically prehensile way about his ankle.

Mr. Robinson made the best of his position in the dazzle and tried to look about him. The Trois Moineaux was built just outside the encircling wall of the tightly corseted little town of St. Pierre and, since St. Pierre clung to the apex of a conical hill, it followed that the inn terrace jutted boldly out over a steep, stepped fall of vineyards over-hanging the plain. The plain was very dim now, overlaid by starlit darkness, yet at the edge of the terrace there was a sense of *view*, and all the occupied tables stood in a row against the low wall, diluting the food and drink they bore with starlight and space. The men and women sitting at these tables all had their faces to the world and their backs to Mr. Robinson. He could not see a single human face. He had come down too late to secure one of the outlooking tables, and his place was imprisoned in a web of light under an olive tree. In the middle of the table, peaches and green grapes were heaped on a one-legged dish. And on the edge of the

dish a caterpillar waved five-sixths of its length drearily in the air, unable to believe that its world could really end at this abrupt slippery rim. Mr. Robinson, shading his eyes from the light, could see every detail of the caterpillar's figure, and it seemed to him worth many minutes of absorbed attention. Its color was a pale greenish-fawn, and it had two dark bumps on its brow by way of eyes.

"How unbearably difficult and lonely its life would seem to us," thought Mr. Robinson, leaning intensely over it. "How frightful if by mistake the merest spark of self-consciousness should get into an insect's body (an accidental short-circuit in the life current, perhaps), and it should know itself absolutely alone—appallingly free." He put his finger in the range of its presistent wavings and watched it crawl with a looping haste down his finger-nail, accepting without question a quite fortuitous salvation from its dilemma. He laid his finger against a leaf, and the caterpillar disembarked briskly after its journey across alien elements. When it was gone, Mr. Robinson looked about him, dazed. "My goodness," he thought, "that caterpillar's face is the only one I have seen to-night!"

The noise of chatter and laughter went up like a kind of smoke from the flickering creatures at the tables near the edge of the terrace. At each table the heads and shoulders of men and women leaned together—were sucked together like flames in a common upward draft. "My dear, she looked like a . . . Oh, well, if you want to. . . . He's the kind of man who . . . *No*, my dear, not in my *bedroom*. . . . A rattling good yarn. . . . Stop me if I've told you this one before. . . ." One man, standing up a little unsteadily facing the table nearest to Mr. Robinson, made a speech: ". . . the last time . . . delightful company . . . fair sex . . . happiest hours of my life . . . mustn't waste your time . . . us mere men . . . as the Irishman said to the Scotchman when . . . happiest moments of all my life . . . one minute and I shall be done . . . always re-

member the happiest days of all my . . . well, I mustn't keep you . . . I heard a little story the other day. . . ." And all the time his audience leaned together round their table, embarrassed, looking away over the dark plain or murmuring together with bent heads.

The only woman whose face Mr. Robinson might have seen was shielding her face with her hands and shaking with silent laughter. The speaker was wavering on his feet very much as the caterpillar had wavered on its tail, and his wide gestures, clawing the air in search of the attention of his friends, suggested to Mr. Robinson the caterpillar's wild gropings for foothold where no foothold was. "Yes," thought Mr. Robinson, "the caterpillar was *my* host. No other face is turned to me."

However, as he thought this, a man came from a farther table and stood quite close, under the olive tree, between Mr. Robinson and the lighted doorway, looking down on him. The man stretched out his hand to the tree and leaned upon it. A freak of light caught the broad short hand, walnut-knuckled and brown, crooked over the bough. Mr. Robinson could not see the man's face at all, but he felt that the visit was friendly. To conciliate this sympathetic stranger, he would even have talked about the weather, or made a joke about pretty girls or beer; but he could not think of anything of that kind to say to a man whose hand, grasping an olive bough, was all that could be known of him. All that Mr. Robinson could do for the moment was to wonder what could have sent the man here. "It could not have been," thought Mr. Robinson humbly, "that he was attracted by my face, because nobody ever is." And then he began thinking how one man's loss is nearly always another man's gain, if considered broadly enough. For one to be forsaken, really, means that another has a new friend.

"This young man," thought Mr. Robinson, gazing at the black outline of the stranger's head, "has probably come here blindly, because of some sudden hurt, some stab,

some insult, inflicted by his friends at that table over there—probably by a woman. Perhaps he thinks he has a broken heart (for he has young shoulders). Nothing short of a wound that temporarily robbed him of his social balance could make him do so strange a thing as suddenly to leave his friends and come here to stand silent by me in the shade. Yet if he only could—as some day, I am convinced, we all shall—know that the sum remains the same—that some other lover is the happier for this loss of his—and that if he had gained a smile from her, the pain he now feels would simply have been shifted to another heart—not dispelled . . . We only have to think impersonally enough, and even death—well, we are all either nearly dead or just born, more or less, and the balance of birth and death never appreciably alters. Personal thinking is the curse of existence. Why are we all crushed under the weight of this strangling *me* —this snake in our garden . . . ?"

So he said to the young man, "Isn't it a curious thing, looking round at young people and old people, that it doesn't really matter if they are born or dead—I mean to say, it's all the same whatever happens, if you follow me, and so many people mind when they needn't, if people would only realize—" At this moment there was a burst of clapping from the far table and the young man bounded from Mr. Robinson's side back to his friends, shouting, "Good egg—have you thought of a word already? Animal, vegetable, or mineral—and remember to speak up because I'm rather hard of hearing."

Mr. Robinson suddenly felt like Herbert Robinson, personally affronted. The sum of happiness (which of course remained unaltered by his setback) for a moment did not matter in the least. He pushed back his chair and walked away, leaving his cheese uneaten and the clown-faced dog without support. He went to his bedroom and sat down opposite his mirror, facing the reflection of his outward *me*. There sat the figure in the mirror, smooth,

plump, pale, with small pouched eyes and thick, straight, wet-looking hair.

"What is this?" asked Mr. Robinson, studing the reflection of his disappointed face—the only human face he had seen that evening. "Look at me—I *am* alive—I am indeed very acutely alive—more alive, perhaps, than all these men and women half-blind—half-dead in their limitations of greed and sex. . . . It is true I have no personal claim on life; I am a virgin and I have no friends—yet I live intensely—and there are—there *are* —*there are* other forms of life than personal life. The eagle and the artichoke are equally alive; and perhaps my way of life is nearer to the eagle's than the artichoke's. And must I be alone—must I live behind cold shoulders because I see *out* instead of *in*—the most vivid form of life conceivable, if only it could be lived perfectly?"

He tried to see himself in the mirror, as was his habit, as a mere pliable pillar of life, a turret of flesh with a prisoner called *life* inside it. He stared himself out of countenance, trying, as it were, to dissolve his poor body by understanding it—poor white, sweating, rubbery thing that was called Herbert Robinson and had no friends. But to-night the prisoner called *life* clung to his prison—to-night his body tingled with egotism—to-night the oblivion that he called wisdom would not come, and he could not become conscious, as he longed to, of the live sky above the roof, the long winds streaming about the valleys, the billions of contented, wary, or terrified creatures moving about the living dust, weeds, and waters of the world. He remained just Herbert Robinson who had not seen any human face while in the midst of his fellow men.

He began to feel an immediate craving—an almost revengeful lust—to be alone, far from men, books, mirrors, and lights, watching, all his life long, the bodiless, mindless movements of animals—ecstatic living things possessing no *me*. "I should scarcely know I was alive, then,

and perhaps never even notice when I died. . . ." He decided he would go away next day, and give no group again the chance to excommunicate him.

He remembered that he had seen a notice at the door of the hotel giving the rare times at which an auto-bus left and arrived at St. Pierre. "I will leave by the early bus, before anyone is awake to turn his back on me."

He could not sleep, but lay uneasily on his bed reading the advertisements in a magazine he had brought with him. Advertisements always comforted him a good deal, because advertisers really, he thought, took a broad view; they wrote of—and to—their fellow men cynically and subtly, taking advantage of the vulgar passion for personal address, and yet treating humanity as one intricate mass —an instrument to be played upon. This seemed the ideal standpoint to Mr. Robinson, and yet he was insulted by the isolation such an ideal involved.

He dressed himself early, replaced in his suitcase the few clothes he had taken out, put some notes in an envelope addressed to Monsieur Dupont, and leaned out of the window to watch for the bus. St. Pierre, a sheaf of white-and-pink plaster houses, was woven together on a hill, like a haycock. The town, though compact and crowned by a sharp white bell-tower, seemed to have melted a little, like a thick candle; the centuries and the sun had softened its fortress outlines. The other hills, untopped by towns, seemed much more definitely constructed; they were austerely built of yellow and green blocks of vineyard, cemented by the dusty green of olive trees. Gleaming, white fluffy clouds peeped over the hills —"like kittens," thought Mr. Robinson who had a fancy for trying to make cosmic comparisons between the small and the big. On the terrace of the inn half a dozen dogs sprawled in the early sun. Over the valley a hawk balanced and swung in the air, so hungry after its night's fast that it swooped rashly and at random several times, and was caught up irritably into the air again after each

dash, as though dangling on a plucked thread. Mr. Robinson leaned long on his sill looking at it, until his elbows felt sore from his weight, and he began to wonder where the bus was that was going to take him away to loneliness. He went down to the terrace, carrying his suitcase, and stood in the archway. There was no sound of a coming bus—no sound at all, in fact, except a splashing and a flapping and a murmuring to the left and right of him. A forward step or two showed him that there were two long washing troughs, one on each side of the archway, each trough shaded by a stone gallery and further enclosed in a sort of trellis of leaning kneading women.

Mr. Robinson noticed uneasily that he could not see one woman's face; all were so deeply bent and absorbed. After a moment, however, a woman's voice from the row behind him asked him if he was waiting for the bus. He turned to reply, hoping to break the spell by finding an ingenuous rustic face lifted to look at him. But all the faces were bent once more, and it was another woman behind him again who told him that the bus had left ten minutes before. Once more the speaker bent over her work before Mr. Robinson had time to turn and see her face. "What a curious protracted accident," he thought, and had time to curse his strange isolation before he realized the irritation of being unable to leave St. Pierre for another half dozen hours. He flung his suitcase into the hall of the inn and walked off up a path that led through the vineyards. As if the whole affair had been prearranged, all the dogs on the terrace rose up and followed him, yawning and stretching surreptitiously, like workers reluctantly leaving their homes at the sound of a factory whistle.

Mr. Robinson, true to his habit, concentrated his attention on—or rather diffused it to embrace—the colors about him. The leaves of the vines especially held his eye; they wore the same frosty bloom that grapes themselves often wear—a sky-blue dew on the green leaf.

Two magpies, with a bottle-green sheen on their wings, gave their police-rattle cry as he came near and then flew off, flaunting their long tails clumsily. A hundred feet higher, where the ground became too steep even for vines, Mr. Robinson found a grove of gnarled old olive trees, edging a thick wood of Spanish chestnuts. Here he sat down and looked between the tree-trunks and over the distorted shadows at the uneven yellow land and the thin blade of mat-blue sea stabbing the farthest hills. The dogs stood round him, expecting him to rise in a minute and lead them on again. Seeing that he still sat where he was, they wagged their tails tolerantly but invitingly. Finally they resigned themselves to the inevitable and began philosophically walking about the grove, sniffing gently at various points in search of a makeshift stationary amusement.

Mr. Robinson watched them with a growing sense of comfort. "Here," he thought, "are the good undeliberate beasts again; I knew they would save me. They don't shut themselves away from life in their little individualities, or account uniquely for their lusts on the silly ground of personality. Their bodies aren't prisons—they're just dormitories. . . ." He delighted in watching the dogs busily engrossed in being alive without self-consciousness. After all, he thought, he did not really depend on men. (For he had been doubting his prized detachment most painfully.)

One of the dogs discovered a mouse-hole and, after thrusting his nose violently into it to verify the immediacy of the smell, began digging, but not very cleverly because he was too large a dog for such petty sports. The other dogs hurried to the spot and, having verified the smell for themselves, stood restively round the first discoverer, wearing the irritable look we all wear when watching someone else bungle over something we feel (erroneously) that we could do very much better ourselves. Finally they pushed the original dog aside and began trying to

dig, all in the same spot, but, finding this impossible, they tapped different veins of the same lode-smell. Soon a space of some ten feet square was filled with a perfect tornado of flying dust, clods, grass, and piston-like fore-paws. Hindlegs remained rooted while forelegs did all the work, but whenever the accumulation of earth to the rear of each dog became inconveniently deep, hindlegs, with a few impatient strong strokes, would dash the heap away to some distance—even as far as Mr. Robinson's boots. Quite suddenly all the dogs, with one impluse, admitted themselves beaten; they concluded without rancor that the area was unmistakably mouseless. They signified their contempt for the place in the usual canine manner, and walked away, sniffing, panting, sniffing again for some new excitement.

Mr. Robinson, who had been, for the duration of the affair, a dog in spirit, expecting at every second that a horrified mouse would emerge from this cyclone of attack, imitated his leaders and quieted down with an insouciance equal to theirs. But he had escaped from the menace of humanity; he was eased—he was sleepy. . . .

He slept for a great many hours, and when he awoke the sunlight was slanting down at the same angle as the hill, throwing immense shadows across the vineyards. The dogs had gone home. And there, on a space of flattened earth between two spreading tree-roots, was a mouse and its family. Mr. Robinson, all mouse now, with no memory of his canine past, lay quite still on his side. The mother mouse moved in spasms, stopping to quiver her nose over invisible interests in the dust. Her brood were like little curled feathers, specks of down blown about by a fitful wind. There seemed to be only one license to move shared by this whole mouse family; when mother stopped, one infant mouse would puff forward, and as soon as its impulse expired, another thistledown brother would glide erratically an inch or two. In this leisurely way the family moved across the space of earth and into

the grass, appearing again and again between the green blades. Mr. Robinson lay still, sycophantically reverent.

Between two blades of grass the senior mouse came out onto a little plateau, about eighteen inches away from Mr. Robinson's unwinking eye. At that range Mr. Robinson could see its face as clearly as one sees the face of a wife over a breakfast table. It was a dignified but greedy face; its eyes, in so far as they had any expression at all, expressed a cold heart; its attraction lay in its texture, a delicious velvet—and that the mouse would never allow a human finger, however friendly, to enjoy. It would have guarded its person as a classical virgin guarded her honor. As soon as Mr. Robinson saw the mouse's remote expression he felt as a lost sailor on a sinking ship might feel, who throws his last rope—and no saving hands grasp it.

He heard the sound of human footsteps behind him. There was a tiny explosion of flight beside him—and the mouse family was not there. Through the little grove marched a line of men in single file, going home from their work in the vineyards over the hill. Mr. Robinson sat up and noticed, with a cold heart, that all the men wore the rush hats of the country pulled down against the low last light of the sun, and that not one face was visible.

Mr. Robinson sat for some time with his face in his hands. He felt his eyes with his finger, and the shape of his nose and cheekbone; he bit his finger with his strong teeth. Here was a face—the only human face in the world. Suddenly craving for the sight of that friend behind the mirror, he got up and walked back to the Trois Moineaux. He found himself very hungry, having starved all day; but his isolation gave him a so much deeper sense of lack than did his empty stomach that, although dinner was in progress among the bands of light and shade on the terrace, his first act was to run to his room and stand before the mirror. There was a mistiness in the mirror. He rubbed it with his hand. The misti-

ness persisted—a compact haze of blankness that exactly covered the reflection of his face. He moved to a different angle—he moved the mirror—he saw clearly the reflection of the room, of his tweed-clad figure, of his tie, of his suitcase in the middle of the floor; but his face remained erased, like an unsatisfactory charcoal sketch. Filled with an extraordinary fear, he stood facing the mirror for some minutes, feeling with tremulous fingers for his eyes, his lips, his forehead. There seemed to him to be the same sensation of haze in his sense of touch as in his eyesight—a nervelessness—a feeling of nauseating contact with a dead thing. It was like touching with an unsuspecting hand one's own limb numbed by cold or by an accident of position.

Mr. Robinson walked downstairs, dazed, and out onto the terrace. As before, the shadowed tables looking out over the edge of the terrace were already surrounded by laughing, chattering parties. Mr. Robinson took his seat, as before, under the olive tree. "Bring me a bottle of . . . Sauterne," he said to the waiter (for he remembered that his late unmarried sister used to sustain upon this wine a reputation for wit in the boarding house in which she had lived). "And, waiter, isn't there a table free looking out at the view? I can't see anything here." It was not the view he craved, of course, but only a point of vantage from which to see the faces of his mysterious noisy neighbors. His need for seeing faces was more immediate than ever, now that his one friend had failed him.

"There will be tables free there in a moment," said the waiter. "They are all going to dance soon. They're only waiting for the moon." And the waiter nodded his shadowed face towards a distant hill, beyond which—looking at this moment like a great far red fire—the moon was coming up. "Look, the moon, the moon, the moon, look . . ." everyone on the terrace was saying. And a few moments later, the moon—now completely round but cut in half

by a neat bar of cloud, took flight lightly from the top of the hill.

There was a scraping of chairs, the scraping of a gramophone, and half a dozen couples of young men and women began dancing between the tall Italian urns and the olive trees on the terrace. Mr. Robinson poured himself out a large tumbler of Sauterne. "Waiter, I don't want a table at the edge now—I want one near the dancers—I want to see their faces."

"There are no tables free in the center of the terrace now. Several are vacant at the edge."

"I can see a table there, near the dancers, with only two chairs occupied. Surely I could sit with them."

"That table is taken by a large party, but most of them are dancing. They will come back there in a moment."

Mr. Robinson, disregarding the waiter and clutching his tumbler in one hand and his bottle in the other, strode to the table he had chosen. "I'm *too* lonely—I must sit here."

"So lonely, poo-oo-oor man," said the woman at the table, a stout middle-aged woman with high shoulders and a high bosom clad in saxe-blue sequins. She turned her face towards him in the pink light of the moon. Mr. Robinson, though desperate, was not surprised. Her face was the same blank—the same terrible disc of nothingness that he had seen in his mirror. Mr. Robinson looked at his companion in dreadful certainty. A twin blank faced him.

"Sh-lonely, eh?" came a thick young voice out of nothingness. "Well, m'lad you'll be damn sight lonelier yet in minute 'f y' come buttin' in on——"

"Ow, Ronnie," expostulated his frightful friend—but at that moment the gramophone fell silent and the dancers came back to their table. Mr. Robinson scanned the spaces that should have been their faces one by one; they were like discs of dazzle seen after unwisely meeting the eye of the sun.

"This old feller sayzzz—lonely—pinched your chair, Belle—"

"Never mind, duckie," said Belle—and threw herself across Mr. Robinson's knee. "Plenty of room for little me."

The white emptiness of her face that was no face blocked out Mr. Robinson's view of the world.

"Oh, my God!" she cried, jumping up suddenly. "I know why he's lonely—why—the man's not alive. Look at his face!"

"I am—I am—I am—" shouted Mr. Robinson in terror. "I'll show you I am . . ." He lurched after her and dragged her among the dancers as the music began again. He shut his eyes. He could hear her wild animal shrieks of laughter and feel her thin struggling body under his hands.

Mr. Robinson sat, quite still but racked by confusion, excitement, and disgust, beside the road on the wall of a vineyard, watching the last stars slip down into the haze that enhaloed the hills. The moon had gone long ago. All Mr. Robinson's heart was set on catching the bus this morning; to him the dawn that was even now imperceptibly replacing the starlight was only a herald of the bus and of escape. He had no thoughts and no plans beyond catching the bus. He knew that he was cold, but flight would warm him; that he was hungry and thirsty, but flight would nourish him; that he was exhausted and broken-hearted, but flight would ease and comfort him.

A white glow crowned a hill, behind which the sky had long been pearly, and in a minute an unbearably bright ray shot from the hill into Mr. Robinson's eyes. The dazzling domed brow of the sun rose between a tree and a crag, and a lily-white light rushed into the valley.

The bus, crackling and crunching, waddled round the bend. Mr. Robinson hailed it with a distraught cry and gesture.

*"Enfin . . . tres peu de places, m'sieu—n'y a qu'un tout p'tit coin par ici . . ."*

Mr. Robinson had no need now to look at the face of the driver, or at the rows of senseless sunlit ghosts that filled the bus. He knew his curse by now: He climbed into the narrow place indicated beside the driver. The bus lurched on down the narrow winding road that overhung the steep vineyards of the valley. Far below—so far below that one could not see the movement of the water—a yellow stream enmeshed its rocks in a net of plaited strands.

Mr. Robinson sat beside the driver, not looking at that phantom faceless face—so insulting to the comfortable sun—but looking only at the road that was leading him to escape. How far to flee he did not know, but all the hope there was, he felt, lay beyond the farthest turn of the road. After one spellbound look at the sun-blinded face of St. Pierre, clinging to its hivelike hill, he looked forward only, at the winding perilous road.

And his acute eyes saw, in the middle of the way, half a dozen specks of live fur, blowing about a shallow rut. . . . The bus's heavy approach had already caused a certain panic in the mouse family. One atom blew one way, one another; there was a sort of little muddled maze of running mice in the road.

Mr. Robinson's heart seemed to burst. Before he was aware, he had sprung to his feet and seized the wheel of the bus from the driver. He had about twenty seconds in which to watch the mice scuttling into the grass—to watch the low loose wall of the outer edge of the road crumble beneath the plunging weight of the bus. He saw, leaning crazily towards him, the face—the *face*—rolling eyes, tight grinning lips—of the driver, looking down at death. There, far down, was the yellow net of the river, spread to catch them all.

# A RUSSIAN STORY[1]

*By* DAVID GARNETT

From *Life and Letters*

The summer of 1912 was hot and the Ukraine lay black, scorched and dusty; lines of peasants toiled all day in the great fields, but the village street was deserted and even fowls and dogs did not stray, but only moved from the west to the north sides of the log cabins so as to keep in the shade.

At the big house it was too hot to play croquet until after sunset, and the day was spent sitting under an awning on the veranda playing reversi, and drinking tea, or in taking the seeds out of red currants with a pin to make jam. In the middle of the hot afternoon Lidia Nicolaevna and her English girl friend sometimes went down to the river where they bathed naked; nobody ever came to the river at that time of day. The two girls undressed a few yards apart and stepping out of the crumpled white rings of chemise and skirt pushed their way through the willow herb to the clayey bank which squeezed up between their toes.

Many plants in flower grew beside the river, and the water, scented with water-lilies and peppermint, was soft upon their skins. As they swam they splashed themselves continually to keep away the horseflies, and for the same reason when the bathe was over, they dried themselves quickly and hurried to put on their clothes; basking in the sun was impossible. Sometimes, instead of going to bathe, they walked out to the forest and spent the day wandering about, gathering toadstools and whortle-berries, but there,

[1] Copyright, 1929, by David Garnett.

too, they could not rest: if they sat down for a moment the flies swarmed in clouds round their heads, got into their mouths or climbed up their nostrils, and in Russia even houseflies bite.

Lidia Nicolaevna had made friends with Hester Crosbie at Newnham all the more easily because the English girl was learning Russian, and had invited her to come to stay with her family during the long vacation, for she longed to show Hester the background of her life and to show her Russia; moreover she loved her too much to be parted from her all the summer. But even in England, when she had asked her, she had remembered how much she had disliked being at home, and had known that they would both be bored. There was no tennis, no parties, no interesting conversation; the neighbours and the young men who occasionally visited the house were grotesque and tedious, and Hester would think that her family was grotesque too.

The girls were bored, but they laughed a good deal and many tiresome things amused them because they were together. Lidia's aunt Maria Ivanovna was tiresome, yet the two girls could laugh and talk easily with the precise middle-aged lady, who would not respect their privacy, and was constantly coming into their bedrooms to look at their clothes. "If she seems fond of you it is because she adores your tailor-made," said Lidia, and for several days Maria Ivanovna could talk of nothing else. "I want a new dress for the autumn: it shall be a Scotch tweed, just like yours. I will get it made at Tchernopinsk; the only difficulty is to get the material," a difficulty that was solved by writing to the English firm of Muir and Mirrelees in Moscow. The girls were fingering the slips of Cheviot and Harris, and discussing the values of checks, herring-bone and Lovat mixtures with Maria Ivanovna in July, but it was the middle of August before the parcel came from Moscow, and Lidia, clapping her hands over the tea-table, told her aunt that they would go with her to the town when she went to the dressmaker.

For several days there was a difficulty about the horses, and who knows when they would have got the carriage if Hester had not spoken about it quite innocently to Nocolai Ivanitch himself! Lidia's father was fat and lazy; he ate a great deal, and, picking his teeth carefully after every meal, went into his study where he drank two more glasses of vodka, spread a handkerchief over his face to keep off flies, and went to sleep. After Hester had spoken in her broken Russian about the carriage he walked out to the estate office and stormed at the overseer, saying that an affront was being put upon a guest, and asking why if there were no horses they ate so much corn. . . .

The carriage was waiting next morning, only, as it turned out, a horse was lame, so there was only the shaft-horse and trace-horse. Maria Ivanovna wore her sateen hobble-skirt to impress the dressmaker: she carried a leather bag ornamented with poker work, swinging on long straps, and a parasol with a long green handle, and she wore a veil. The two girls wore light summer frocks and refused to go back for their mackintoshes. Every one in the house came to stand on the steps to watch them set off; Nicolai Ivanitch stood on the top step beaming at them and took a cigar out of his mouth to call out: "Look out for the Tartars! If they see girls like you they'll catch you and sell you to the Turks for their harems," and Darya, the old nurse, was on the bottom step and darted out to cling to the carriage, asking them to make sure they had the list safe, and the picnic-basket, and the servants and the children waved handkerchiefs and laughed and were ready to shed tears.

Pyotr the coachman whipped the horses into a sudden gallop, and the chaise bounded lightly from side to side of the beaten earth road, over the ruts. The sweet scent of flowering buckwheat in the great fields filled the fresh morning, and as they passed the mere a heron rose close to the vodka distillery and flew slowly across to the river.

After an hour they came to the forest and turned into it, exchanging the scents of flowers for the cries of birds,

and the level view of golden rye and wheat for the shadow of tall poplars and birches, amongst the branches of which they could see golden orioles darting, on their dark wings, and fierce little black or tawny hawks perching close to clusters of rooks' nests.

Once the two girls saw a red squirrel run across the path, and once they passed a peasant wearing a torn yellow shirt and bark shoes, who walked along with his hands in his pockets and a little axe balanced on his shoulder.

When they had gone some miles they came to a clearing, and, turning on the box, the coachman told them that he would take them a shorter way, then drawing his horses off the track among the birch stumps. The sun fell full on them, and out of the shadow of the trees it was oppressively hot, a heat all the greater since the horses had to go at walking pace, picking their way. Occasionally a wheel caught on a stump, and one side of the chaise leaped in the air and fell back again, throwing them all together in a heap; when this happened the coachman swore gently to the horses and Lidia shrieked and clutched Hester. But Maria Ivanovna sat bolt upright in her best clothes; smiling eagerly and expectantly she looked as though she were driving in the Bois de Boulogne and had just caught sight of an acquaintance.

Presently Hester saw that she was looking at a little watch which swung on an enamel brooch on her bust, like a military medal. "We'll have lunch now, Pyotr." The coachman pulled up and began unpacking the hamper, while the ladies remained sitting in the open carriage. "How different from an English picnic!" Hester said to herself as the coachman, having spread a table-cloth on the seat opposite, laid out caviare sandwiches, pasties, smoked ham, and sausages, and then opened a bottle of port and began slicing up a melon.

"How far does this forest stretch and to whom does it all belong?" asked Hester, bringing the simple answer: "It is ours until we come to the river."

"Who looks after it?"

"Why, our foresters—and I am sorry that we have come this short way or we might have seen one of them; he is handsome for a peasant, but they say that he's dying."

But Hester was more interested in whether there were elks in the forest than in hearing about the illness of the forester, and as they gnawed at the half-circles of melon the talk was of wolves coming into the villages in winter, to eat the watch-dogs in their kennels, with terrible stories of cold and starvation which Hester found hard to credit amid the wealth of summer.

The crumbs were brushed away, the last drops of port swallowed down, and they continued on their way in heat which became more intolerably oppressive every moment. When they had passed from last year's clearing into one of the winter before, the horses could only walk slowly, with the undergrowth and even young saplings whipping their bellies and bending down under the oncoming chaise, impeding its progress like weeds holding back a boat.

When the women looked back, they saw the grey undersides of the little triangular birch leaves, and the red stems slowly straightening in their wake.

The short cut did not seem so short as they meandered from side to side avoiding the taller growth, but at last the clearing closed in, and the shadow under a wall of forest which rose up like a green cliff, engulfed them. The trunks of the trees were set close together, and their way was difficult until they had breasted a bank of earth and plunged down into the ditch below, and then found themselves again upon the track. Even in the shadow of the trees the air was stiflingly hot; Maria Ivanovna seemed to feel it at last, for she drew a large flagon of eau-de-Cologne from her bag, lifted her veil and sprinkled her face. The two girls followed her example, and revived by the cool sting of the spirit began once more to laugh and chatter. Soon the forest came to an end, and when they had forded the river, the coachman whipped the horses into a gallop, and half an hour later they reached the town.

In Tchernopinsk there is an enormous new cathedral of glazed white brick, with the usual green roofs and golden cupola, which stands not quite in the middle of a huge square of dried mud, full of filth and rubbish. At the far side of the square from the cathedral stands the governor's residence, with two striped sentry boxes in front of the gates. "Why are there no sentries?" asked Hester—a question which led Maria Ivanovna to reply that the governor was a peaceful man who disliked fuss, and that, moreover, he always spent the summer on the Riviera. The post office and the police station are half a mile outside the town, close to the railway, so that in Tchernopinsk itself there are no architectural features except the sentry boxes and the cathedral; there are scarcely any houses of more than one storey, yet Lidia was telling her friend that there were twelve thousand inhabitants, of whom ten thousand were Jews who lived by selling Manchester goods and hardware. The coachman drew up in the shadow of the cathedral, and climbing out of the carriage the ladies separated: Maria Ivanovna going straight to her dressmaker, and the two girls preparing to stroll round the town. For a few moments they watched the older woman as she trotted briskly off with tiny steps across the great expanse of beaten earth, avoiding the heaps of garbage, swinging her bag and holding her silk sunshade bravely over her head. Then they turned to each other laughing and, linking their arms, walked off, pursued by a crowd of begging children, each of whom was blessed with some deformity, so that it seemed to Hester that a whole Jewish children's hospital had been let loose on them. At last the little boy with the hare-lip, the little girl with her nose eaten away, and the baby with only three fingers, were discouraged by Lidia's hard words, and the two girls were free to wander round the square, and to glance down one or two of the side streets.

Soon they were tired and took refuge in a confectioner's shop, where they bought a pound of little kringles as fly-blown and as yellow with varnish as the only picture on the

wall, which represented Robinson Crusoe aiming at a bear in a tree, while Man Friday danced at the end of the snow-laden branch of a spruce-fir. This picture Hester would have wished to buy had she not been held back by a scruple of conscience, for it seemed to her wicked to take away the only beautiful or interesting thing in the whole town. When their interest in the picture was exhausted, they went back to sit in the carriage and munch kringles, amusing themselves by looking at the Jews passing and repassing, shuffling, waddling, and slinking, gesticulating with dirty fingers, and swinging their arms from side to side.

Half an hour later Maria Ivanovna appeared and began triumphantly telling them what the tailor had said when he had undone the parcel and handled the cloth, how he had measured her and cut out, while she was waiting, a pattern of the dress in hessian, had basted it together and tried it on. As she talked she crunched up one kringle after another, and as Pyotr had already collected her parcels, he whipped up the horses and they set off. Although it was by then four o'clock in the afternoon, the heat was fiercer than it had been in the morning. The air was heavy and painful to breathe; not a puff of wind rippled over the fields, and the corn stood motionless in a horrid dream. Maria Ivanovna had soon used up the last of her eau-de-Cologne, and the three women sat streaming with sweat, too exhausted to speak, and hardly able to keep their seats in the jolting carriage. It seemed to Hester a long way to the river and the ford, but before they reached it suddenly the carriage stopped abruptly and the coachman pointed to a dog which was running about aimlessly in the road before them: a liver-and-white pointer, so emaciated that the bones stood out and the skin drooped in folds between its ribs. The beast held its head low down on one side and often shook it; from its movements Hester could see that it was distracted with pain. Once the circle in which it ran brought it close to the carriage, and at that moment Hester suddenly saw that Maria Ivanovna had closed her parasol and, grip-

ping it like a sword, was preparing for defence lest the creature attack them. But the dog passed by harmlessly, and still shaking its head set off along the road to the town. "A mad dog," said Lidia; then she added: "And I've got such an awful headache myself." Maria Ivanovna opened her sunshade, the coachman whipped up the horses, and a few minutes later they had crossed the river and entered the forest.

There were no longer any birds to be seen, no squirrels ran across the path, they did not see a peasant with an axe, and all the eager pleasure they had felt in the morning was forgotten. The chaise bumped them up and down, and the motion which in the morning had seemed like a boat riding lightly among waves, was like a box falling downstairs; they felt their very bones bruised by the shaking, and the springs of the carriage seemed to have collapsed.

Suddenly in the distance there was the faint muttering of thunder, soon they saw flashes, and a few drops of rain fell. Pyotr turned round on the box and suggested that they should take shelter at the forester's hut, and Maria Ivanovna nodded vigorously and began to urge him to drive faster. He began lashing the horses with his whip, and they set off at a gallop down the narrow tunnel between the trees. Already it had become almost dark, the sun-spangled forest of the morning seemed to them black and full of evil, and the darkness was all the greater because of the blinding flashes of lightning which lit up every leaf and twig, and when the thunder came they could feel the horses leap forward in sudden bounds of terror. Pyotr shouted at them, cracking his whip and lashing the trace-horse: flecks of foam from the brutes' mouths fell on the girls' muslin sleeves. The chaise rocked so much that they had to hold on to avoid being thrown out, and sometimes it seemed to them that it was going to swing round altogether and be smashed against the trunk of a tree. Lidia held her forehead in one hand and said dully: "My head aches," and Maria Ivanovna suddenly screamed something in Hester's ear, but the

thunder was too loud and too continuous for the English girl to catch a word. The old lady sat bolt upright, gripping an iron rail beside the cushion with her right hand. Suddenly the trees fell away, and they entered a clearing, one or two buildings were revealed in a flash of lightning, and they saw that Pyotr was tugging at the reins with all his might, trying to pull up the horses, which were beside themselves with terror.

Bump, bump went the chaise as he pulled the horses off the track and the wheels struck against the stumps of trees, and it was not until he had taken the horses in a great circle all round the clearing and they had twice nearly overturned, that he was able to pull up by the very threshold of the forester's hut. Without saying a word, the three women jumped out of the chaise and ran in at the open doorway, and in the next moment the rain came down like a sheet of steel, blotting out the chaise and Pyotr and the horses. "Have we got all the parcels?" exclaimed Maria Ivanovna, ignoring the tall figure of the forester, who stood bowing in the inner doorway and begging them to come in and be seated. Hester looked at him eagerly and though she remembered Lidia saying that he was handsome, she was amazed that she had been told so little; for to her his beauty was absolutely overwhelming: he seemed the most beautiful, perhaps the only beautiful man she had ever seen. Tall and lean, but with the broad shoulders of the peasant, he was a young man, between twenty and thirty years old, with thick tawny fair hair parted in the middle and cut off horizontally like a straw thatch, so as just to show the lobe of his ears. The beard was darker and more curly than the hair, and the eyebrows were marked; below them, large deep blue eyes looked at her modestly and gravely; his face was very pale.

The three women went into the living-room and sat down while the forester, with slow, unhurried courtesy, fetched food from the cupboard and offered them curds in lacquered bowls with wooden spoons, then, blowing up the fire, he put

some water on it to boil eggs. Before the water boiled Pyotr called out: he was having difficulty with the horses: the thunder and lightning were growing worse, and the horses plunged about terrified. The forester threw a sheepskin over his shoulders and went outside. Maria Ivanovna, who had scarcely looked once in his direction, and hardly seemed to be aware of her surroundings, began greedily eating from the bowl of curd. "That's good," she said, licking her lips. "Only the peasants have no sugar." Hester, on the other hand, looked about her all the time, and all the details of the room remained stamped in her mind: the gun with a polished walnut stock and gleaming barrels, and trigger-guard which shone like silver, leaning against the wall, under a gilt icon with a little flame before it, the earthen-ware cooking-pots arranged neatly in a row on the shelf. Everything in the room was neat and scrupulously clean; everywhere there was clean wood well washed and polished, the log walls which had been smoothed with an axe, the floor which was made of whole pine trees, split in two, the oak table, the ash stools on which they were sitting. On one of the walls two wolf-skins had been pegged up, and from a beam over the stove a ham and several bunches of herbs and onions were hanging. The smell of the room was clean and strong, made up of the scent of rich hay, of polished wood, of Russian leather, and of something pungent like gunpowder.

For a few moments the rumble of the thunder died away, and through the hiss of rain they could hear the forester talking quietly to one of the horses. When Pyotr came back they could hear him unharnessing it, then he led it away, and the forester came back into the room. He had run out bareheaded, and his thick locks were soaked and dark with water, which ran trickling down his shaven neck and fell in drops from his beard. When he came into the room a beautiful setter-bitch, which Hester had not seen before, came out from under the table, and, watching the beast's gesture of adoration, the girl felt envy mingled with

her sympathy. Thus she would willingly greet her own lord coming in from the storm outside.

The forester took a towel from a cupboard, dried his face and neck and wiped his hands; then he turned over an hour-glass of sand and put six eggs into the saucepan of boiling water. Soon the table was set with bread and salt, and the eggs put before them in wooden egg-cups. "Would it please you to have mushrooms, my lady?" he asked, and Maria Ivanovna was moved to clap her hands and say "Do you hear, Lidia? There are wood mushrooms!"

The man's hands were big, and, as he turned over the toadstools in his basket, picking out first the honey-coloured yellow ones and then the mauve, Hester watched his strong fingers, and all this cookery and hospitality of his delighted her, and she was shocked by the complete indifference of her companions. The mushrooms were set stewing in milk, before Hester noticed that there was a strange unaccountable expression in the forester's face: a look of terror which she surprised there, terror which changed almost at once into hope. The man seemed to have become excited, but she could not guess the reason of that look and of that excitement.

The wood mushrooms were delicious, and Maria Ivanovna mopped up the last of their gravy with crumbs of rye bread. "Delicious," she said, smacking her lips. "Delicious. Now tell me about your health. They say you'll die, don't they?" The terror and the trembling eagerness came back into the man's face, as he begged her to read a paper the doctor had given him. While he was looking for it he began telling them how he had suffered from fainting fits which lasted for hours, and how he had gone to the town to see the doctor, who had sounded him with a stethoscope. "He put it here and there all over my chest and back, and listened, and then he wrote out this paper and sent me to the dispensary with it. They are Jews there, but they gave me some powders. 'You may drop dead any day, my boy,' said the Jew. 'Your heart's worn out.'"

Maria Ivanovna licked her lips with a little pink tongue while she was reading aloud, and Hester watched the man's strong fingers nervously picking at something, and for some reason this picking of his fingers frightened her.

"Dmitri Semyonitch Chaagayev, Forester.

"Complains of prolonged fainting fits.

"Diagnosis: Progressive valvular disease of the heart. His general health is remarkably good. Any overstrain or hard manual labour is likely to prove fatal.

"Treatment: Digitalis: a powder every five days."

"Well you see, my friend, there's no hope there," said Maria Ivanovna, complacently. "Do you understand what's written here?" "No, madam, please explain to me. Does he think there's a chance yet?" "Indeed he doesn't. He says any hard work you do is likely to kill you. But you have to work, don't you? God will take you one day when you are cutting a tree, or hauling logs." The forester nodded; his eyes were terror-stricken, and there was sweat gathering on his pale face. "But even if you didn't work you would die quite soon. Because you see he says here the disease is progressive. Do you know what that means?" "No, madam, I can only read Slavonic, and the scriptures, and the educated words I don't know." He was picking with his fingers desperately at something. "Progressive means that it gets worse and worse of itself. So whatever you do you can't stop it. There are little flaps in the heart like the leathers in a pump, and this disease is eating away one of the flaps. When it's perished right through you'll die, and that may happen any day now." The forester took a handkerchief out of his breeches pocket and wiped his face. His hand was shaking, and it was some time before he could trust himself to speak. At last, however, he moistened his lips and said very quietly: "Then, what are the powders for?" Maria Ivanovna shrugged her shoulders. "Doctors like to give medicines. It may save you for a few weeks, but it can't cure you." "It does upset the stomach," said the forester. "The Jew in the dispensary said I wasn't to

mind that, but that if I saw everything coloured blue I was to give up taking them for three weeks. What was the reason of his saying that, madam?" "And do you see things blue?" asked Maria Ivanovna, laughing. "No, madam, I don't as yet." "Well, perhaps you will before you die, if you take too many of these powders and they poison you. If you take too many powders they will kill you, and if you stop taking them it seems you'll die of heart disease."

There was a silence for some time. At last the forester said hardly above a whisper: "Old Sasha Kusmitch used to have fainting-fits and pains in his heart, like mine; the wise woman at Bielechuk cured him; so I went to her and she bid me take foxglove leaves. Maybe I had better try them."

Lidia, who had been silent for some time, suddenly lifted her head saying: "That's what the doctor has given you. Digitalis means foxglove. Those powders are powdered foxglove. You mustn't take any more or it will be too much."

"So there's no hope from the wise woman, it seems," said the forester. "Gracious me, I should think not," said Maria Ivanovna. "If the doctor says you'll die you will die. It's no good asking an ignorant old woman." "It seems she has given him the same powders, anyway," said Lidia.

The man began shivering all over; and feeling ashamed of himself got up and dropping the wooden dipper into a birchbark bucket of water he drank a little. "Death may come any minute, then?" he asked. "Yes, any minute. It's incurable, and it gets worse every day. Do you understand now?" Maria Ivanovna began folding up the letter and looked out of the little carved window.

"The rain has almost stopped," she said. "Pyotr! put the horses in." "Directly, directly," came the coachman's voice, who had been listening to their conversation from the outer shed.

"What am I to tell my brother?" she asked, turning to the forester. "Have you any message to send him? How are things going in the forest?" The forester smiled suddenly,

showing two rows of even white teeth. "Ah, tell him, please, that I greet him and his relations most respectfully, and that everything goes on capitally. Tell him there's plenty of game. Tell him, please, that the townsmen have been coming to steal the timber where it hasn't been cleared away, but I have beaten them off so far. They bring guns now and have taken to shooting at me whenever they see me." He laughed, a warm hearty laugh. "It's a good job my gun's a breech-loader and that they are bad shots. The last time they came there were a dozen of them all armed with guns and revolvers, but I caught them at the ford, and they had to swim for it and leave their horses. But I sent word about that before when I sent the horses along."

The coachman put his head in at the doorway: "We're all ready, madam." The three women got up and went out, followed by the forester, who was still talking eagerly.

"The peasants will start felling trees here and there, when the leaves have fallen, but I catch them now and then, and they know it's a risky game. But these town chaps are the mischief. It's like fighting the Japanese." He laughed, and Hester turned to look at him as they drove off as he stood outside his hut, bowing low, with the setter-bitch beside him.

The coachman drove slowly: there were great pools of water lying along the track which flew up in spray from the wheels.

"That rest has done me a lot of good," said Maria Ivanovna, tucking a rug round her. "It was just what I wanted. Now if the road wasn't so bumpy I think I could take a nap." She looked happily about her with the sleepy expression of some one who has just dined very well indeed.

"I wonder if he'll really see everything coloured blue before he dies," she said with a chuckle. "I should like to know that."

# THE DERELICT[1]

*By* ELEANOR GAUKROGER

From *The Manchester Guardian*

He came into the rural tramcar and a smell of whisky came before him. He shambled in, but his shambling was not that of the sloucher. He carried his bundle and pushed on his stick, like any other tramp, and his bundle and his stick were those of a man of the roads. It was his contemplation of the fleeting countryside that first arrested me.

His eyes opened wider, and they were sea blue and tender, and the blueness and the tenderness deepened as he looked. We were passing down the slope of a low hill in Yorkshire, and the sunlight was slanting across a valley that held a railway and a river, the river a shining thread and the railway glorified in light. We found it beautiful, and he found it teeming with poetry. He slid down into his seat, his legs outstretched across the width of the tram. His trousers did not fit; they were of fine black cloth, now shining and worn, many inches were turned up at the hem, and through a jagged tear I could see part of a hairy white leg.

His boots were broken, and there was blood dried round the break where the stones had cut his foot. He pointed a hand over the valley and I saw his fingers, sensitive and tapering. Suddenly he declaimed, in a deep, fluid voice, "Behold"—and his arm took a wide sweep through the air—"whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, and the round ocean and the living air, and the blue sky, and in the mind of man!"

[1] Copyright, 1929, by Eleanor Gaukroger.

A smile went round the tramcar. The country woman sitting in the corner with her basket looked at him with curled lip. The conductor grinned indulgently, the little child, with her legs sticking straight out, watched him with wide eyes, and the business man, with the straight crease in his trousers, eyed him sharply, and then impatiently cracked his newspaper into position. A derelict he was, there was no doubt of it, but to-day, at least, a happy derelict. He paid his fare with a sixpence, and as he contemptuously tossed the three pennies change lightly into the air and caught them again he talked. "I'm going to the bastille," he said in that clear fluid voice. "I will spend the night there, I will sleep with God knows who, and eat of God knows what, and pray to any god I like. There's a little lass in a shop at the corner; she'll save me that till morning," and he tossed the three coppers and caught them again. "With all my worldly wealth I thee endow." Then he laughed, a full mellow laugh, and another wave of the whisky fumes passed through the air. "Then I shall be destitute; you see, only the destitute can go to the bastille. I believe in aristocracy; what we must keep in this country is aristocracy, the rule of the gentleman. I believe in blood, blood and breeding, a good dog and a good horse, and a man to keep his head up and his heel down, no matter what's under it; none of your common herd for me. Those that have a herding instinct let 'em herd, but a ruler for me, the King! and the Church! and the country! Here's to them! We are not now that strength which in old days moved heaven and earth, but that which we are, we are." And he laughed again triumphantly, and held up the three coppers as an imaginary glass, and I saw the blue veins in the long white fingers delicately threading.

Then he died.

The hand dropped down and the three pennies fell ringing upon the floor of the tramcar. The light went out of the blue in the eyes, but they did not shut, the smile twisted itself ruefully round his lips, and his head fell down upon

his chest and seemed to knock his body over upon the seat. All that in a moment. The conductor came and tried to prop him up, the country woman put down her basket and heaved heavily to bend over him, "Eh, whatever will yer say," she said. "I believe he's gooan!"

The bell rang sharply and the tram stopped, the business man folded his newspaper quickly and got out, he spoke to a policeman, and the man in blue came importantly in.

He was no derelict now. They stretched him out upon the seat; strangely majestic he looked; the country woman had closed his eyes. The policeman opened his coat and came straight against the white body, no garment beneath the fine black coat, the lining worn away, but the soiled linen tab remaining. "Saville Row" it said, and importantly the policeman noted it. The doctor came and, as though it were some new truth, pronounced him dead. "Exhaustion," and then, with a whimsical smile, "Whisky on an empty stomach." The car went on. The country woman picked up the three pennies and dropped them into the trousers pocket of the straight form. They carried him on to the mortuary of the workhouse—the bastille, he had called it. There, spite of his threepence, he would be received. No derelict now. Rather, as they bore him away, a king he seemed, carried with circumstance, the tread of the bearers re-echoing on the flagged courtyard, the sense of his fuller knowledge giving him greatness.

# EGYPTIAN NOCTURNE [1]

*By* E. D. GOITEIN

From *The New Statesman*

I was sitting sipping coffee in the café of Muhammed Ali in Alexandria. A gramophone wailed a nasal love song, from which all the passion had been spent at least twenty years before. The café was fairly full, but there were empty tables. I had not been sipping long when in came a gentleman most immaculately dressed. He put a monocle into his right eye and looked around the café, took it out, put it into his left and looked again. I do not know whether he had seen me or not, but he came straight up to my table, bowed to me, sat down.

"May I order you something?" he said in English.

"I beg your pardon! I mean—no—thank you, so much," I said. I was more than surprised.

"I am taking some coffee with some lettuce and a little something else—perhaps. I shall see."

"Are you?" I said.

"I sell and buy motor-cars. I am a big business. Therefore I take refeshment when I am tired."

"Quite, quite."

"But I have a trouble to-day. My wife she is gone from me. She is of French extraction. I am of Beyrout. My name is Abraham Mendoza. Of an old family in the Levant. I tell no one of my troubles, but you have a look *sympathique*. I therefore open my heart to you. Waiter! Ah! He does not understand a civilised language." He asked for what he wanted in Arabic. The

[1] Copyright, 1929, by E. D. Goitein.

waiter grinned and answered in a liquid French. Abraham Mendoza put his monocle back into his eye, and said to me: "You may wonder perhaps a little why if I have a great sorrow in my heart I do still eat. The reason is I must keep alive. My business needs all my thinking and breathing. . . . But I talk too much about myself. Are you perhaps married?"

"I am not."

"Merciful is God!"

For less than a minute he said nothing. I sipped my coffee. The gramophone wailed more piteously.

"It is good to hear music," said Mr. Mendoza. "In these savage parts there is no music for a civilised ear. When I was in Paris every night did I go to the opera. My wife—but she was not it then—she has the ear for it and she was improving my taste. I think much of Puccini; what do you think, please?"

I told him what I thought of Puccini. While I was telling him a tray full of the most varied dishes arrived.

"These olives are for you," he said. "I like your sympathy—you must eat with me. And here are rolls not fresh but they can be eaten. Ah! You agree with me about Puccini. That is right. But I do not think highly of our Wagner. You know I heard his *Marriage of Figaro*. I——"

"You don't mean Wagner—do you?" I said, as politely as possible.

"No, no no. Yes. Yes. I mean Wagner, but not the *Marriage of Figaro*. I tell you her name in a minute." He thought and ate lettuce at the same time. "I have her name. *The Flying Man of Holland*."

"*The Flying Dutchman?*"

"Yes! Yes! The noise I consider too much. My wife says it is too much Teutonic. I agree with her because she has a big knowledge of music. Do you agree with me on Wagner, please?"

"I am very fond of Wagner."

"Well. It is all right. Do you own horses?"

"I do not."

"My brother is a great owner. He is very glad with racing. At all the Cairo races my brother is with his horses. He has won many purses. Do you remember when Blue Peter won? That was my brother's horse. He bought the horse from an English lord. A fine history his horse had from his father and mother's side. If you go to Cairo I give an introduction for you to my brother."

"Thank you. But I have just come from Cairo."

"Well. It is all right. You are not eating, please."

"Thanks. I really——"

"They will not charge you. I will pay."

"I was not thinking of that, but——"

"Well, it is all right. How is your Parliament going?"

"Very nicely, thank you."

"You are a Conservative, of course."

"Not exactly."

"It is not good to have hot heads in a Parliament. Conservatives are the right people to govern. They have all history behind them. The hot heads are bringing destruction everywhere and they spoil business. There can be nothing done when they have too much strength on their side. Mr. Balwind—is he not a safe man? I see nothing from him but good. He is much loved by the people—is he not?"

"He is not unpopular."

"The heart of the English people is sound. I am feeling great respect for the English people. I do not say it because you are English. But because my sense tells me so. My wife's sister married an Englishman before she died. Ah! Perhaps you will care to see a picture by photograph of my wife?"

He pulled an expensive and brightly coloured handkerchief from his pocket, wiped his fingers with it, took out his wallet from which he withdrew a photograph of a rather stout and smiling lady.

"My wife," he said proudly, and while I was looking at it and admiring, he added by way of confirmation: "Mrs. Abraham Mendoza."

"A very fine photo," I said—which was true.

"Ah! You admire her! Everybody is loving her. But to-day I have a great sorrow from her. I think she has anger with me. I am not to blame for it. I do not know whether it is not another man who has gone away with her. If it is so I am a ruined man. I am dead. I am no more. I would shoot the man, but my family would not like it. I have much respect for my family."

I came to the conclusion that I had had enough of Mr. Mendoza, and having drained my cup dry, I said: "Well—I hope your sorrow is—er—er—only temporary. I am afraid I must be going. Good-night."

At once he wiped his mouth with his silk handkerchief, pushed the food away and stood up.

"I will accompany you a little," he said. I stared in blank amazement.

The waiter was about to hand me a bill when Mr. Mendoza snatched it from his hand and said in the choicest Arabic I have ever heard: "You mule, you son of a congenital idiot of a father, you blind sheep, you brother of decrepit donkeys, you djinn-possessed gibbering savage—do you give my customers a bill instead of to me? Must you be taught by me your business, you inefficient barber?"

I listened to this tirade with great joy. The waiter listened quite unconcernedly until he was called a barber. This seemed to irritate him immensely.

"Am I to report you to the manager," the waiter replied in his Parisian French, "for abusing me and insulting me—before this gentleman? You may call me a barber, sir, but it is an insult."

"I must thank you, Mr. Mendoza," I said, "but you will most certainly not pay my bill for me."

"It is all right. You will pay for me some time."

He paid his bill and my bill and, as he had threatened, he accompanied me for some yards until we came to his car.

"Which is your hotel?" he asked.

"You really must not think of giving me a lift."

"You will get in, please. You are so *sympathique*—you have saved me from many sad courses which I might have taken if I had not met you. You make my heart free from its sorrow."

With a sympathetic look on my face I stepped into his car.

At the door of my hotel I thanked him for his kindness and told him that if ever he came to London I would be delighted to see him. I did not give him any address.

"One moment," he said. "That car in which you have ridden cost me £800. I will sell it to you for £500. I would not mention business to you—but I have a great sorrow upon me. If I have £500 for this car, I could spend the time and the money to go after my wife, and bring her back to me. . . . It is a beautiful car. Only £500. . . ."

# THE DOOR IN THE ATTIC [1]

*By* DOROTHY JOHNSON

From *The English Review*

Mrs. Perkins, creamy, plump, and comfortable, was almost asleep beside her brass tray of silver tea-things, which had been set for her near the fire in the so-called library. This was according to custom, except in the height of summer; for the library was the cosiest room in the house, and the drawing-room had a chilly sanctity. The depths of the fire glowed intensely, but from its black uplands there came a cracking and a sputtering; suddenly a new flame broke out, waving and struggling from a fissure with a noise like the flap of a sail. It startled Mrs. Perkins, who widened her big blue eyes at the phenomenon. And just then the front-door bell rang.

It could not be George—George never forgot his latch-key. Most probably the Vicar's daughter—begging. But when Chorley entered she merely said: "A lady to see you, Madam. . . . No, Madam, she wouldn't give her name; she said you wouldn't know it."

"And you put her in the drawing-room?" breathed Mrs. Perkins, rolling to her feet in alarm. She didn't much like the idea of a stranger being left alone in her drawing-room. Assuredly the unknown was begging, and not for any good cause either; begging, with a watchful eye and ready pocket for anything which might be picked up without bothering to beg. And when, from the drawing-room doorway, she saw the caller stooping eagerly down to her little cabinet full of special treasures, her round

[1] Copyright, 1929, by Dorothy Johnson.

face flushed in jealous anger to the roots of her blonde hair. But the stranger turned, and the rosy tide ebbed; this woman was no thief. A beggar, perhaps, for a *really* good cause, and yet—no, hardly even that. "A beautiful face," thought Mrs. Perkins, with a sort of reluctant reverence. Not "a beautiful woman," which is quite another matter.

The stranger, frail and elegant in black, smiled at Mrs. Perkins, and gave her the oddest illusion of being welcomed as a guest. A guest here, in her own drawing-room! She must assert herself. "Well, what can I do for *you?*" she demanded. Then she felt—for she was not insensitive—that she had spoken like a rude shopwoman; and she coloured again, this time from vexation.

A quiver passed over the smiling face, as if a stone had been rudely flung into a little moonlit pool. "I ought to beg your pardon. You don't know me at all, and I hadn't any business to come here. But the truth is, I used to live in this house when I was a child. With my mother."

"With your mother—why, naturally," said Mrs. Perkins. They were both seated now—she could hardly tell how that had happened; the stranger was playing with her gloves on her lap, and her finger-tips were enviable. "I wonder what she uses?" pondered Mrs. Perkins.

"I haven't seen the place for more than twenty years. But I happened to be in the neighbourhood to-night, and suddenly I—I had a longing to look inside again."

"Well, now, that's very natural," heartily observed Mrs. Perkins, though under her warmth suspicion stirred once more. The slim woman's eyes—very large, very bright, in a face worn to an ethereal delicacy—were never still for a moment. Up and down, to and fro, their gaze wandered, from the old-rose carpet to the chaste grey wallpaper, from the engravings neatly framed in black to the brasses coldly garnishing the fireplace, then, pausing at the golden Empire clock, to the alabaster bowl, sus-

pended from the ceiling, through which the electric light fell softly. "So different!" breathed the stranger. "And yet—it's odd, isn't it, how furniture always tends to arrange itself in one particular way in a room. We had the sofa where you have it, and two easy chairs placed just like these. But not a bit the same kind of easy chairs!"

"It must be sad for you, seeing it all changed," said Mrs. Perkins. And then, in a burst of generosity, "I'll be bound you liked your mother's things a good deal better than mine."

But the unknown shook her head. "Our things weren't half as nice as yours." Mrs. Perkins's heart leapt. "Ours were good and solid, but hideous. Stodgy mid-Victorian stuff; horsehair and Utrecht velvet, and masses of carving to hold the dust. Awful. And I can smell the woolwork still." She wrinkled her dainty nose. "But there is something about one's childhood—" Her gaze sought the lamp again, left it in its milky tranquillity, and wandered restlessly up and down. "Something irrecoverable—*what* is it?"

"Oh, well," replied Mrs. Perkins, gathering herself into a practical, common-sense bundle with folded arms. "We all know that childhood's much the best time of our lives."

"But it *isn't*," contradicted the visitor brightly. "I've often been happier, since I grew up, than ever I was in my childhood here. I loved my mother"— ("Naturally," said Mrs. Perkins)—"but I've loved other people much better. And yet"—her nose wrinkled again—"I left something here that I've never found since. Now I seem to be getting it again—in tiny whiffs from ghostly woolwork! Something—or the hope of something. What is it? What can it be? I keep catching it, but I can't hold it!"

"Mad," said Mrs. Perkins to herself; which does not mean that she thought it. She knew well enough that

her caller was not mad. But she found her perplexing and disturbing; and she was a woman who could not stay perplexed. When a riddle stood before her, as it were, with its mouth open, it was her habit to thrust in the first sop which came handy, and turn away. "Mad," she said; then as the helpless mouth still gaped, she tried another sop, "lit'rary." All the same, the stranger's hands, now loosely clasped on her knee, were exquisite. And her brooding face, with the downcast eyes, was sweet. "Like a Madonna," decided Mrs. Perkins. "But then so was Mrs. What's-her-name—the baby-farming woman."

"It's the light," mused the dubious Madonna, "that makes the most difference. We had gas, of course, and at night the house seemed full of trembling shadows. Mystery, mystery everywhere! Now *this* light"—the long lashes rose—"is so clear and steady, as if it were quite kind but wouldn't stand any nonsense. Do you know what I mean?" Her glance fell from the lamp, slid over Mrs. Perkins, and settled with seeming irrelevance on her own wedding-ring. Mrs. Perkins's romantic imagination tried to get busy. It beat round for a while without much success. Never mind, soon confidences would begin: "I was only just seventeen—" that sort of tale. A treat. Mrs. Perkins licked her full pink lips.

But she was disappointed. No story came. Instead, the visitor turned again to the cabinet. "These wee mites of curios simply *fascinate* me," she murmured. "Now my mother hated what she called 'jee-jaws'; we hadn't one in the house. Oh, those fairy cups and saucers, and that tiny silver ship!" Her lovely hands fluttered against the glass, like butterflies, in vain. Mrs. Perkins, watching narrowly, was buffeted back and forth, between two impulses; one, to ring for Chorley to show the lady out—not that she had ever done such a thing, but she had read of it in her novels; the other, to clasp the slender creature close in her warm plump arms. These two

promptings, being equally powerful, kept her motionless; she felt positively bruised on both sides, but she sat like a woman carved in creamy stone—and watched.

The sweet, frail waif, the questionable female, turned abruptly from the cabinet. "I'm behaving atrociously, wasting your time and not even telling you what I want——"

"But I can guess what you want!" cried Mrs. Perkins, leaning out in triumph over her crossed arms. "You want to see over the house! And"—raising her voice in defiance of some persistent inner qualms—"what's more, you *shall* see over the house! We'd the bedrooms done up this spring, and they're a picture. Especially the boys' bedroom."

"It isn't so much the bedrooms that I want to see," faltered the petitioner. She had risen, and stood with her back to the cabinet touching it on either side as though its miniature prettiness gave her comfort through the glass. ("Finger-marks!" thought Mrs. Perkins, "but *such* fingers—") "It's—but now you *will* think me a fool. It's"—a quick breath and fleeting smile—"well, there used to be, in the farthest attic, a little door opening over a step. But it never *was* opened."

"It's still there," put in Mrs. Perkins, after squeezing up her eyes for a second's recollection. "And funnily enough, I don't think we've ever opened it, either. You see, we hardly use those attics. Girls won't sleep in such places nowadays——"

"It was always locked; so I used to imagine it led to most wonderful places. I was an only child——"

"Poor little thing! People have no right to have just one! They get morbid," placidly commiserated Mrs. Perkins.

"And I got—morbid, as you say. Some of my fancies were pretty, others weren't——"

"Ah!" said Mrs. Perkins knowingly. "I'll be bound your nurse put ideas into your head!"

"And none of them were very original, I'm afraid.

Sometimes that step was the beginning of a spiral staircase, winding up and up among the stars into Fairyland——"

"My Peter," confessed or boasted Mrs. Perkins, "was a regular terror for make-believe."

The stranger seemed to check herself. "Anyhow, my mother wouldn't give me the key. She didn't say she never would. I can see her now, reading her magazine." The sensitive lips curved at a memory. "'What d'you want to go in there for?' she would say. I can hear her. . . . 'It's nothing but a cupboard, and empty at that, and the key's upstairs. Yes, yes, I'll get it for you some time. You run out and play while it's sunny.' Then she would turn the page with her beautiful hand——"

"You take after her there," eagerly interrupted Mrs. Perkins. "Might I ask, if it isn't rude, how you manage to keep your hands like that?"

"Like *what?*" The stranger frowned faintly at her wedding-ring. "They just *are* like that—whatever 'that' is."

"Sorry," snapped Mrs. Perkins, for she was hurt. But the stranger quivered and smiled, and her smile was healing and disarming. "*I'm* sorry, too," she breathed; then plump, romantic Mrs. Perkins could have kissed her. "But you understand, don't you? I've a fancy—indeed, a craving—to peep into that cupboard at last."

"And so you shall! And so you shall! I can put my hand on the key in two two's! I declare I'm quite thrilled myself! It seems so queer never to have opened a door in your own house, but—" She talked herself out of the room, trying to drown the murmurs of a subterranean discomfort; for George might be back at any moment (and in any case he would hear about the visit, for she never could keep anything from him); and goodness, how he would go on! He had burglars on the brain, especially lady burglars with sweet faces, who paid preliminary calls to spy out the land for their gang. Never mind. His helpmeet sniffed and giggled. She returned with a rusty

key, a candle in a flat enamelled candlestick, and matches.

"We've no electric light up aloft," she explained. Up aloft! How fine that sounded, as if they were going to climb a high tower rocking in the gale. Her round cheeks burned, her eyes smarted, her matronly bosom heaved. The two women stood smiling excitedly into each other's faces; but Mrs. Perkins, stirred to the depths, was more excited than the other. "Are you ready now?" she breathed. She had a singular impression, then, that for a moment the stranger melted away behind her smile, leaving it to keep her place, but soon came back and put it on again and stepped forward on the great adventure. "*Great Adventure,*" babbled Mrs. Perkins aloud, "did you ever see that play? Mind the first step, it's pretty dim out here, we want a new bulb——"

"You should have seen this hall when we had gas. There was a red frosted globe up there, at the turn of the stairs, and it threw a shaking net of shadows all over the wall of the house. When I was going up to bed, I used to think I was a little fly caught in a web, and the big clock ticking in the corner was waiting to rush out on me."

Mrs. Perkins squeaked and shuddered. "*I* can't do with spiders, either. Won't you come and see the bedrooms first?" She had paused at the top of the first flight; to the left lay the approach to the said bedrooms, on the right a few steps under an arch led solemnly to darkness. "The boys' room——"

"Afterwards, if I may. It's very good of you."

"They're twins, so they've had to go to school together. I do so miss them," complained their mother, turning slowly to the right. "There's a switch on the back landing, round the edge of the arch."

"Don't," interposed the stranger, touching her outstretched hand. A touch of ice—a snow-fairy's touch. "This landing is as it used to be at night, so black and enormous. Let's stop a minute and feel how black and enormous it is." They stood together, in the dark. Mrs.

Perkins could hear her own breathing; the visitor's she could not hear. The unknown had melted into the shadows; and she herself dwindled to a tiny girl, panting alone in the darkness, frightening herself for fun, just ready to be frightened in earnest. On the skylight, far above, over the stairs which presently she must mount, there drove a sharp rattle of rain like steel needles. "Gramophone needles," thought Mrs. Perkins wildly.

A whisper stole out of the gloom. "It used to seem such a long, long way from the sitting-room, and I believed that when I came through the arch a curtain fell behind me and shut me off." A child's sweet laugh followed the whisper. Then Mrs. Perkins, foolishly, inexplicably, thrust out into the darkness that one of her soft hands which was not cumbered with the unlighted candle. "You poor little mite!" she whimpered. "You dear little mite! And I did so want a baby girl! I've never told anybody, but I did. I *do!*"

The groping hand groped in vain. The ripple of laughter went on awhile, and ceased. The rain and the swelling wind behind it filled a pause of some seconds, and then, "Time to be going on," said somebody. Mrs. Perkins, after a start, supposed that she must have said it. It was time, at any rate, to take command of one's own wits and voice. "If we *are* going on, that is," she added with emphasis. She rested the candlestick on the newel at the foot of the attic stairs.

"Let's leave it alone," she urged to night and nothingness and a small wilful child who was hiding in them somewhere. "For goodness sake! You'd better not open that door—ever. You know you'd better not. It's nothing but a cupboard——"

"And empty at that," came the bodiless whisper. "Empty." No, it was more than a whisper now. It was a grown woman's ordinary voice: soft, clear, rather colourless. The speaker was present, too, in the flesh, frail, but substantial enough, and close to Mrs. Perkins.

Nor was it, after all, so very dark on the landing; grey gleams stole in from many quarters, especially from the pale skylight. "Empty. I know that. And since I know it already, what harm is there in my making sure?"

"Ah, but there's different sorts of knowing!" moaned Mrs. Perkins. Life was usually simple to her, and she preferred it so. Speech meant asking for two yards, double width, or saying that there was too much pepper in the stew. Now she found herself laden with meanings for which she had no words. "There's knowing—and there's knowing for certain!" It was a cry of despair. This was her own house; it was not really dark; if she struck a match, it would be fairly light; if she flicked a switch, it would be very light indeed; and she was one grown woman talking (in her own house, mind!) to another. Yet she was transfixed by a sharp, strong terror; it was right through her heart, and she could not pluck it out; it hurt so cruelly that she could not breathe. "Don't let us go any farther!" she begged; and even as she begged, she began to climb.

But about the seventh step she snatched a respite. "A minute, please—didn't know I was so short of breath!" She touched her temples and found them wet. A curtain had fallen, as it were, in the archway, between Mrs. Perkins and her own dear comfortable life. She tried to pierce that veil with her mind, to clutch at familiar things. "And then we'll be right quick—just peep in and come down again—and I'll make Chorley bring some more tea. And you shall sit by the fire and tell me about how you used to live here with your mother. I always did say"—her brain spun and her teeth chattered—"that your childhood was the happiest time of your life."

"You say so," came the quiet reply from the level of her elbow. "But you don't think so." The voice had risen to her shoulder, with a rustling of silks in motion. "If you thought so, you would do—what I shall do tonight."

Mrs. Perkins received these words without scrutiny and set them, for the moment, aside; much as if she had taken a present wrapped in paper, to be unwrapped when the visitor had gone. A cruel trick to play on a child. . . . "D'you know," she panted, continuing the ascent, "I could almost make-believe you and I were kiddies, having a lark." The rain, fusillading the skylight, checked her. "Hark at it!" she babbled. "Doesn't it sound cross with us?"

They had reached the top; there was a glimmering of white walls all about. "Whitewashed still," commented the unknown casually. "If you stared at them hard, I remember, pictures used to come out in lovely colours."

"I caught my little Mick once drawing on them with his crayons," said Mrs. Perkins. She chuckled; though she was cold and faint, and though the sword of terror had dissolved into a vast vague sickness, it was funny to remember Mick's round face when she nabbed him. "I didn't tell his father for fear he might— Hark at the rain!"

But the visitor had slipped past her, rustling. There came the click of a bolt withdrawn. Mrs. Perkins wanted to talk a great deal, to explain that the first attic was full of cracked china and such, and the second had a few boxes in it, but it was such a nuisance getting trunks up those stairs. All this chatter whirled round and round, like dust, inside her head, and could not find an outlet.

"Time to light the candle," suggested the stranger from a distance. She must have passed into the farthest attic. Mrs. Perkins went forward a stiff pace or two and halted, sure that her fingers would save her by proving too weak to obey. But they betrayed her; they lit the candle with perfect precision, as though they were under another control than hers. The flame struggled, sank, rose to a clear point, and threw the shadows of two women gigantically upon utter nakedness. The farthest attic had no fire-

place. There was a little dormer window against which the night pressed blackly. Mrs. Perkins gasped when she caught a glimpse of a movement in that inky mirror. But it was only the reflection of herself, golden and dusky, carrying the candle.

The other woman was waiting patiently by the door which they had come to unlock. It was very narrow, very low. "I used to pretend," she murmured, looking at it, "that a tiny witch in a steeple-crowned hat had whisked through just before I came into this room. Once I persuaded myself I'd seen a bit of her red skirt vanishing——"

"I suppose you do want to see inside?" interrupted Mrs. Perkins—rudely, because she was in great discomfort. But when the white hand was extended for the key, she drew back. "No!" she protested childishly. "Don't! Please, please, don't!"

But the other child was wilful; the key was gently slipped from the reluctant finger. In that second Mrs. Perkins had for the last time a full view of her caller's face. She was blinded with a sudden rush of tears. "Don't!" she wailed, hearing the key in the lock. "Oh, don't!" she screamed when the sound ceased, and the wind screamed thinly with her.

Then, a child complete, though overgrown, she blew the candle out and ran.

Ran—waddled—down the attic stairs to the landing, where she flicked the switch. A flood of light revealed the top of the backstairs, the bathroom door, the nursery door, the servants' doors, a cobweb in the corner of the ceiling which Jane really *ought* to have got down. These things closed in around her like a bodyguard. Meanwhile the visitor was descending the steps behind her.

"Aren't we a pair of babies!" laughed Mrs. Perkins shakily, her head averted, her hand at her side.

"You were too late," remarked the stranger calmly. "I saw inside the cupboard."

"Well?" mocked Mrs. Perkins weakly, still trembling, still

looking away. "You aren't much better off, I should think! There wasn't anything there, of course?"

A momentary lull fell upon the night. Both wind and rain were silent, listening, breathless. The box of matches dropped sharply from the unsteady candlestick. It was the visitor who retrieved it. "Thank you," said its owner, in a muffled voice over her shoulder. Behind her the switch clicked; they were on the stairs; a veil had fallen, in the archway, between them and the enormous darkness.

Safe on the red and yellow tiles of her hall, Mrs. Perkins drew a long breath. "You will stop for a cup of tea and a chat, won't you? Do you know"—trying hard to be easy—"you've never told me your name yet?"

"Thank you very much, but I've an appointment," was the reply. Without knowing why, Mrs. Perkins almost cried out. When the impulse had spent itself, her hand met the stranger's steadier one, now gloved, upon the latch.

"Of course," she breathed, "there *wasn't* anything there?"

A pause, then: "Nothing," answered the stranger.

"I warned you," whimpered Mrs. Perkins, "but you would have your own way, you know."

"It doesn't make any difference," said the stranger. "My mind was made up before I came."

She was gone then, through a gap which seemed hardly wide enough for her slim figure. Crying confusedly, Mrs. Perkins flung the door wide open. The wind rushed in at her out of the blackness, and with it came rain and a few sticky leaves and a solid weary husband, who grounded his umbrella in the stand, dashed his hat at its peg, and demanded information about the strange woman who had pushed past him.

"She was begging," stammered his desperate wife, "b-begging."

# THE DANCERS[1]

## *By* ERIC LINKLATER

From *The London Mercury*

Mr. G. P. Pomfret was a wealthy man and the centre of as large a circle of friends and relations as the junior partner in a prosperous brewery might reasonably expect to be. But, until he disappeared, he was not famous. Then he became a household word, and the five members of his family—consanguineous, allied and presumptively allied—who disappeared with him, all earned pages in those indefatigable supplements to our national biography, the Sunday newspapers. For with Mr. Pomfret there also vanished Mrs. Pomfret his wife; Lt.-Commander Hugo Disney and Mrs. Disney (*née* Pomfret); Miss Joan Pomfret; and Mr. George Otto Samways, her fiancé.

The circumstances of their joint occultation were remarkable, and as the geographical environment was sufficiently and yet not immeasurably remote from the more advertised holiday haunts of man, the affair took to itself a halo of romance that was entirely different from the hectic nimbus which ever and again makes some obscure police-court luminous.

It has been said that Mr. Pomfret was wealthy. He had inherited a large number of shares in an excellent brewery and with them a sanguine and speculative temperament. His fortune persuaded the members of his family, initial and contributory, readily to accept a certain imperiousness of temper which Mr. Pomfret occasionally exhibited; and so when one evening early in June he said, from the top of his

[1] Copyright, 1929, by Eric Linklater.

dinner-table, "I intend, subject to your approval, to take you all with me on a somewhat unusual holiday," his household (including Lt.-Commander Hugo Disney) and the solitary guest (Mr. George Otto Samways) accepted the invitation in the manner of a royal command.

"Where are we going, daddy?" asked Joan, adeptly disengaging the integument of her peach.

"To Orkney, my dear," replied Mr. Pomfret, and surveyed with benign amusement the expressions of surprise which impinged upon or flitted across the faces of his domestic audience.

Lt.-Commander Disney alone showed no amazement. "That's excellent," he said heartily. "I've meant for long enough to go back there."

Orkney is worthy of some attention. The islands have a romantic appeal as the home of lost races. The Vikings settled there, and before the Vikings there was a mysterious people, Picts or such, little men who vanished and left few traces of their occupation. At some time Culdee monks from Ireland went there; and went again as silently. Stewart earls ruled the islands like young pagan emperors. When the Great War began the British Fleet chose Scapa Flow, in the heart of the Orkneys, as its headquarters and battle haven. Later the German Fleet also rested there; but at the still bottom, not on the wind-flawed surface of the waters.

It was, however, the excellence of the trout-fishing which led Lt.-Commander Disney to applaud Mr. Pomfret's decision. He had spent the less active intervals in three years of naval warfare in Scapa Flow, and had become acquainted with the opportunities of sport which the island lochs offered to a fisherman robust enough to disregard occasional inclemencies of weather. Frequently he had spoken to Mr. Pomfret of brown trout and sea trout, praising their strain of fishy pugnacity and the delicate savour of their flesh; praising too the lure of sunny waters under a canopy of brilliant sky all painted with cloud galleons, porpoises and

swimming dolphins of cloud, and at evening gorgeous with the barred crimson and gold, the errant greens, the daffodil hues, the rosy outflung feathers, of the sun sliding bedwards behind the enormous wall of the Atlantic. And these conversations, moving like yeast in Mr. Pomfret's brain, had finally given rise to this momentous decision.

It is unnecessary to consider the manner of the journey north, which was complicated. Mr. Pomfret had rented for two months a large house called Swandale, in one of the seaward parishes in the northern part of the Mainland of Orkney; it was considered advisable to take, as well as his family, a motor-car, a chauffeur and three maids. The first week or so of their residence passed pleasantly enough. They were enraptured with the scenery, the vast stretches of ever-changing sea, the majestic cliffs loud with the ceaseless activity of gulls; they watched the diving gannets, the ludicrous earnest puffins, the graceful terns, and hysterical oyster-catchers. They were delighted with the shy and independent islanders. They enjoyed the novelty of peat-fires blazing in an open hearth. Lt.-Commander Disney and Mrs. Disney fished with notable success in the neighboring lochs. Mr. Pomfret walked and enquired diligently into local traditions and history. And Mrs. Pomfret read the works of Lord Lytton, to which she was ineradicably addicted. Joan Pomfret and Otto Samways occupied themselves in ways apparently satisfactory, and certainly remote from the rest of the family.

The holiday would probably have continued on these pleasant and harmless lines had it not been for the imaginative temperament (excited by love and romantic surroundings) of Miss Joan Pomfret. It suddenly occurred to her that they were rapidly approaching Midsummer Day.

Now the summer solstice has, or had, its appropriate festivals. In the northern parts of Britain the sun used indisputably to reign supreme, and, at such times as his presence blessed the earth almost throughout the circle of day and night, it was proper to honour him with dancing

and other devout festivities. In Orkney he succeeds at Midsummer in banishing the thief of night for all but a dim hour or so from the dominion of his majesty. There is light on the islands, benign and irresistible, except for one or perhaps two shadowed hours in the cycle of twenty-four.

Something of this was in Joan's mind when she said over the marmalade one morning, "Daddy, the day after tomorrow is Midsummer. Let's celebrate it properly."

"How, my dear?" asked Mr. Pomfret, putting down the toast which was within an inch of his mouth.

"By a midnight picnic. We'll spend the night on an island—on Eynhallow—and see the dawn come up before the after-glow is out of the sky. And we'll dance when the sun shows himself again."

"I haven't danced for years," said Mrs. Pomfret pathetically, "and don't you think the grass would be damp?"

"Tut!" said Mr. Pomfret. "Grass damp? Pouf!" Spousal resistance invariably excited him to action, and he had, it may be remembered, a sanguine nature.

"I should like a chance to watch the birds on Eynhallow," said Lt.-Commander Disney. "They're interesting in the early morning. And we could take plenty of rugs, and a flask, you know, in case it is cold."

"Of course we could." Mr. Pomfret was in a singularly eupeptic mood that morning. He felt positively boyish. "Do you remember, Mother"—he called Mrs. Pomfret Mother when he felt particularly young and could think good-naturedly of her growing a little mature—"Do you remember that bicycling tour I did once in Cornwall? Excellent fun it was, Hugo. It must be twenty-five years ago, and I often wish that I had found an opportunity to repeat it. This idea of yours is splendid, Joan, my dear. Dancing to the Midsummer Sun—Ha! I shall show you all how to dance. Hugo, my boy, will you see about a boat?"

Eynhallow is a small uninhabited island between the Mainland of Orkney and the island of Rousay. It is surrounded by unruly tides, but to the fishermen who know

them it is not difficult to land, provided the weather is calm. Those definitely in favour of the expedition were Mr. Pomfret, Lt.-Commander Disney, Joan, and naturally, since Joan would be there, Otto Samways. Mrs. Disney shrugged her shoulders and said, "It will mean the first late night I've had for a fortnight and the first woollen undies I've worn for years. I don't mind, though." Poor Mrs. Pomfret sighed and returned to *The Last Days of Pompeii*.

Hugo Disney persuaded a local fisherman, John Corrigall, that it would be more profitable than lobster-fishing to sail the Pomfret party to Eynhallow and call for them on the following morning, and so the preliminaries of the excursion were successfully completed. John Corrigall was privately convinced that they were all mad—except Mrs. Pomfret, whom he found to be an unwilling victim—but refrained from saying so, except in the privacy of his own family; for a madman's money is as good as that of a man dogmatically and indecently sane, and indeed, more easily earned.

On Midsummer Eve then, after dinner, the Pomfrets set sail. They carried baskets of food, for a night in the open is a potent ally of hunger, but no instrument of fire, such as a primus stove, for that, Joan said, would be an insult to the omnipotence of the sun, who should rule alone. They took rugs and cushions, and Mrs. Pomfret wore a fur coat and Russian boots. They set a portable gramophone—for they were to dance—in the stern of the boat, and Otto Samways carried two albums of records. There was a heavy cargo aboard when John Corrigall hauled his sheet and brought the boat's head round for Eynhallow. He landed them, without more incident than a faint protest from Mrs. Pomfret, on a shingle beach, and left them.

And that is the last that has been seen of them.

When Corrigall returned to Eynhallow in the morning, he found the island deserted. He shouted, and there was no answer, he walked round the island, which is small, and found no trace of the midnight visitors. He sat on a rock

and struggled heavily with thought, and then, because he was anxious to get back before the tide turned, he sailed home again.

It is, of course, an ingrained belief in the mind of the northern Scot that the English are a flighty, unreliable race. They travel far from home when there is no need to travel, they are wantonly extravagant (John Corrigall had been paid in advance), and their actions spring from impulse instead of emanating slowly from cautious deliberation. They are volatile (as the English say the French are volatile), and their volatility makes them difficult to understand. So John Corrigall said nothing, except to his wife, of the disappearance of the Pomfrets. He had no intention of making a fool of himself by raising what was possibly a false alarm, and the whole day, which might have been profitably spent on investigation, was wasted.

In the evening the chauffeur, an energetic man when aroused, went to make inquiries, and was astounded to hear that his master had apparently vanished. With the decision of a man who had lived in cities and learnt, before he took to driving one, the art of evading motor-cars, he told a little girl who happened to be at hand to summon the village constable, and ordered Corrigall to make his boat ready for sea. The latter protested, for the wind and tide were at odds and a pretty sea was breaking round Eynhallow. But the chauffeur was like adamant, and drove the constable and John Corrigall to the shore, helped to push out the boat, and after a stormy crossing landed, wet through, on the island. A thorough search was made, and not a sign of the Pomfrets could be found; nothing, that is, except a little tag of bright metal which was found lying on the grass, the significance of which was unknown to Corrigall and the policeman, who had no experience of modern toilets, and to the chauffeur, who was virtuous and unmarried. Later it was identified simultaneously by the maids as the end, the catch or hatch as it were, of a stocking-suspender such as

many ladies wear. If Miss Joan had been dancing vigorously, it might have sprung asunder from the rest of the article and fallen to the ground, they said.

The three maids became hysterical soon after they learnt of the mystery; John Corrigall went home to his bed, convinced that it did not concern him; the constable was useless, having encountered no such case in his previous professional experience; and it was left to the chauffeur to devise a course of action.

He persuaded the constable to cycle to Kirkwall, the capital and cathedral city of Orkney, and report to such superior officers as he might discover there. He insisted on the local telegraph office opening after hours, and sent an expensive message to the newspaper which guided the thought and chronicled the deeds of the town in which Mr. Pomfret had prominently lived. And he made a careful inventory of everything that the unfortunate party had taken with them. Then he sat down to compose a long letter to the newspaper already mentioned.

The assistant-editor of the paper made instant and magnificent use of the chauffeur's telegram. Times were dull, and his chief was away on holiday. The chief sub-editor was a man of consummate craft and no conscience. Between them they splashed a throbbing, breath-taking story over the two main news columns. They flung across the page a streaming headline that challenged the hearts of their readers like a lonely bugle sounding on a frosty night. Eynhallow became a Treasure Island encircled by northern mists, and the sober citizens who read this strange story of the disappearance of people whom they knew so well (by sight), whose motor-cars they had envied, and whose abilities they had derided, felt creeping into their souls an Arctic fog of doubt, a cold hush of suspense, a breath of icy wind from the waste seas of mystery. Which was precisely the effect intended by the enterprising assistant-editor and the highly competent sub-editor.

This was the beginning of the story which subsequently took all England by the ears, and echoed, thinly or tumultuously, in ribald, hushed, or strident accents, in railway carriages and on the tops of buses, at street-corners and over dinner-tables, at chamber-concerts and through brass-band recitals, in all places where two or three newspaper-readers were gathered together, and finally in one or two topically-inclined pulpits and behind the footlights of the variety stage.

The assistant-editor sent hurrying northwards a young and alert reporter, and it was not his fault that an emissary of a great London evening paper arrived in Orkney before him. For the latter travelled by aeroplane, the evening paper being wealthy and its editor having been noticeably impressed by the provincial report. The first general information, therefore, that Britain had of the Great Pomfret Mystery was a brightly written account of the long flight of Our Special Investigator.

Within twenty-four hours every self-respecting news-sheet in the country had published a map of Orkney, on which the approximate position of Eynhallow was surrounded by a black circle. The more erudite contributed brief historical sketches of the islands, and a few discovered that a church or monastery had once been built on the particular islet of mystery. Brief descriptions of Mr. Pomfret with at least the names, Christian names, and ages of his party appeared in all the papers. Two offered ready-made solutions to the problem, three laughed at it, and one rashly cited as a parallel case the vanishing crew of the *Marie Celeste*.

On the following day a Paymaster-Commander wrote to say that he had once, during the War, motored from Scapa to Swandale (Mr. Pomfret's house), and distinctly remembered seeing Eynhallow. "A charming, sea-girt, romantic-looking island," he wrote, "with the appearance of having withstood a thousand storms and blossomed with a thousand green springtimes." Subsequently an Admiral, who

had also been in Scapa during the War, corroborated this, writing to say that he had seen the island himself. Thereafter its actual existence was not doubted.

In a short time photographs began to appear, photographs of Mr. Pomfret and his family, one of Lt.-Commander Disney in uniform, and a charming picture of Miss Joan Pomfret playing in a local tennis tournament. The two reporters sent long descriptive stories about nothing in particular, and their respective sub-editors garnished them with suggestive and arresting headlines. Several papers remembered that the *Hampshire,* with Lord Kitchener aboard, had been sunk on the other side of Orkney, and "A Student of Crime" wrote to suggest that a floating mine, one of the chain responsible for that dire catastrophe, had survived to be washed up on Eynhallow, and had blown the Pomfrets into minute and undiscoverable fragments. No sound of an explosion, however, had startled Orkney, and no trace of such a convulsion was apparent on the island. A photograph of John Corrigall and his boat appeared, an artistic camera study with an admirable sky effect. Several stories of mysterious yachts cruising in the vicinity were mooted, and the yachts were all satisfactorily identified as trawlers.

On the second Sunday after the disappearance, when the mystery had been deepened by time and even the most ingenious could offer no likely solution, an eminent clergyman, a staunch supporter of temperance, publicly warned the country against the danger of owning breweries. Mr. Pomfret, he said, was widely known as a brewer, one who had made his fortune out of beer, that enemy of man and canker in the home. And Mr. Pomfret had disappeared. Divine vengeance, he said, cometh like a thief in the night. To-day we are here, in the midst of our wickedness, and to-morrow we are plucked up and cast into the oven. Let all, he concluded, who own breweries consider the appalling fate of George Plover Pomfret, and mend their ways by honest repentance while there is yet time.

And then the London paper had a scoop. Its reporter

discovered that during all this bustle of conjecture, doubt and query, investigation and disappointment, a German professor had quietly been living, as a summer boarder, in a farmhouse not two miles distant from Swandale. His own explanation of his presence so near the scene of supposed tragedy was that he was collecting and examining survivals of Norse influence in the Orkney dialect; but his story, especially when it was printed alongside his own photograph, met with derisive incredulity, and in the natural excitement that followed this disclosure there was not a little sturdy denunciation of the Hidden Hand. The professor was detained in custody, and was released only on the telegraphic intervention of the German Foreign Secretary, who personally vouched for his honesty and innocence. This again deepened the suspicions of many newspaper readers.

The local police, meanwhile, reinforced by an inspector from Edinburgh and a detective from Scotland Yard, had quietly and systematically established that there were no clues to the whereabouts of Mr. Pomfret and his friends, and no solution to the mystery of their disappearance. It was impossible for anyone to get on to or off the island without a boat, and no boat could easily have landed, owing to the state of the tide, between the hour at which the Pomfrets were disembarked and the morning visit of John Corrigall. No strange vessel had been seen in the vicinity. The Pomfrets could not have made a raft, as some hundreds of people had suggested, because they had nothing out of which to make one, except two luncheon baskets, a gramophone, some records, and a box of gramophone needles which were, it must be admitted, too small to nail together pieces of driftwood, supposing suitable planks to have been present on the beach. Nor, unless they had been attacked by an epidemic mania, a surging and contagious Sinbad complex, was there any particular reason why they should have wanted to make a raft. No clear evidence even of their presence on the island, except an integral portion of a lady's stocking-suspender, was found, and some people

suggested that John Corrigall was a liar and that the Promfrets had never gone there. But the circumstantial evidence of the servants was in Corrigall's favour, and he had not, it was found, the mental ability successfully to dispose of six adult bodies.

Investigation of a practical kind came to an end. There was no one to question and nothing to find. Even the spiritualistic mediums who offered their services were of no real assistance, though some of them claimed to have established communication with Miss Joan Pomfret, who told them that everything was for the best in the best of all possible Beyonds. Mrs. Pomfret, it was reported, had said, "Sometimes it is light here and sometimes it is dark. I have not seen Bulmer, but I am happy." There was a little discussion on the significance of *Bulmer,* till a personal friend suggested that it was a mis-tapping for the name of Mrs. Pomfret's favourite author, but the general mystery was in danger of being forgotten, dismissed as insoluble.

It was about this time that Mr. Harold Pinto left Kirkwall in the Orkneys for Leith, sailing on the S.S. *St. Giles.* Mr. Pinto was a commercial traveller, more silent than many of his class, a student of human nature, and in his way an amateur of life.

When the *St. Giles* was some four hours out of Kirkwall he stepped into the small deckhouse which served as a smoking-room, and, pressing a bell, presently ordered a bottle of beer. There were, in the smoking-room, two other commerical travellers with whom he was slightly acquainted, the reporter of the provincial newspaper which had first heard of the Pomfret case, an elderly farmer who said he was going to South Africa, and a young, bright-eyed man, carelessly dressed, distinguished by a short, stubby beard. He looked, thought Mr. Pinto, as though he might be a gentleman. His nails were clean; but his soft collar was disgustingly dirty and his clothes had evidently been slept in. He asked for Bass, at the

same time as Mr. Pinto, in an educated and pleasant voice, but when the beer came he merely tasted it, and an expression of disgust passed over his face. He took no part in the general conversation, though Mr. Pinto noticed that he followed the talk actively with his eyes—very expressive eyes they were, full, at times, of an almost impish merriment.

The conversation naturally centred round the Pomfret Mystery, and the reporter very graphically told the story from the beginning, embellished with certain details which had not been published. "There are some things," he said, "which I wouldn't willingly tell outside this company. It's my private belief that old Pomfret took drugs. Don't ask me for proof, because I'm not going to tell you. And there's another thing. Joan Pomfret once asked the gardener at Swandale—he's a local man—whether he knew of any really lonely places near by. The sort of places where there were likely to be no casual passers-by. I didn't send that piece of news to my paper because I'm still waiting for the psychological moment at which to make it public. But you'll admit that it's significant."

The other commercial travellers both contributed theories, at which the reporter scoffed, but Mr. Pinto was almost as silent as the young man with the beard.

"Mass suicide won't do," said the reporter, "however much you talk about crowd psychology; and mass murder, followed by suicide of the murderer, won't do either. None of them was likely to run amok. And where are the bodies? One at least would have been washed up before now. No, it's my opinion that there's an international gang at the bottom of it, and one of the party —at least one—was either a confederate or a fugitive from the justice of the gang."

The man who was going to South Africa said that he had a cousin who had once disappeared in Mashonaland. He was about to tell the story more fully when the two commercial travellers and the reporter discovered that

they were sleepy—it was nearly midnight—and went hurriedly below. And after a minute or two the man with the cousin in Mashonaland followed them.

The young man with the stubby beard sat still, staring at nothing with eyes that were alert and full of comprehension. He seemed to be listening to the throb of the steamer's screw and the answering wash of the sea. His lips moved slightly when a wave, louder than the others, ran with a slithering caress along the ship's side, and he smiled engagingly, looking at Mr. Pinto as though he expected an answering smile.

"The Möder Di," [1] he said, "laughing at fisherman's wives. All summer she laughs lightly, but the laughter of her winter rut is like icebergs breaking."

Mr. Pinto, remarking that it seemed to be a fine night, stepped out on to the deck.

"Oh, a glorious night," said the young man with the beard, following him. "Look at the clouds, like grey foxes running from the moon!"

"Indeed, there is one extraordinarily like a fox," replied Mr. Pinto politely.

"She is hunting to-night," said the young man. "Foxes and grey wolves. And see, there's a stag in the west. A great night for hunting, and all the sky to run through."

Mr. Pinto and his friend had the deck to themselves, and Mr. Pinto began to feel curiously lonely in such strange company.

"Listen," said the young man, pointing over the rail. "Do you hear a shoal of herring talking out there? There's a hum of fear in the air. Perhaps a thresher-shark is coming through the Firth."

Mr. Pinto, convinced that he had a lunatic to deal with, was considering an excuse for going below when the young man said: "I saw you sitting silent while those fools were talking about Pomfret's disappearance. Why did you say nothing?"

[1] **Möder Di. The Ninth Wave.**

"Because I didn't think any of their theories were good enough," answered Mr. Pinto, feeling a little easier, "and because I had no theory of my own to offer."

"What do you think? You must think something?"

Mr. Pinto blinked once or twice, and then diffidently suggested, " 'There are more things in heaven and earth,' you know; it sounds foolish, after having been quoted so often and so unnecessarily, but——"

"It does not sound foolish. Those others were fools. You, it seems, are not yet a fool; though you will be, if you live to grow old and yet not old enough. If you like, I will tell you what happened to George Pomfret and his friends. Sit there."

Mr. Pinto, rather subdued, sat; and the young man walked once or twice up and down, his hair flying like a black banner in the wind, turned his face up to the moon to laugh loudly and melodiously, and suddenly said: "They landed on Eynhallow in the quietness of a perfect evening. The tide was talking to the shore, telling it the story of the Seven Seals who went to Sule Skerry, but they could not hear it then. A redshank whistled 'O Joy! look at them!' as they stepped ashore. But they did not know that either. They made a lot of noise as they walked up the shingle beach and the rabbits in the grass, because they made a noise, were not frightened, but only ran a little way and turned to look at them.

"Mrs. Pomfret was not happy, but they let her sit on the rugs and she fell asleep. The others walked round the island—it is not big—and threw stones into the sea. The sea chuckled and threw more stones on to the beach; but they did not know that. And the sea woke birds who were roosting there, and the birds flew round and laughed at them. By and by the shadow of night came —it was not really night—and they sat down to eat. They ate for a long time, and woke Mrs. Pomfret, who said she could never eat out of doors, and so they let her sleep again. The others talked. They were happy,

in a way, but what they talked was nonsense. Even Joan, who was in love, talked nonsense which she does not like to think about now."

"Then—," Mr. Pinto excitedly tried to interrupt, but the young man went imperturbably on.

"Disney said one or two things about the birds which were true, but they did not listen to him. And by and by—the hours pass quickly on Midsummer night—it was time to dance. They had taken a gramophone with them, and Joan had found a wide circle of turf, as round as a penny and heavenly smooth, with a square rock beside it. They put the gramophone on the rock and played a fox-trot or some dance like that. Disney and Norah Disney danced together, and Joan danced with Samways. Two or three times they danced, and old Promfret made jokes and put new records on.

"And then Joan said, 'These aren't proper dances for Eynhallow and Midsummer Eve. I hate them.' And she stopped the gramophone. She picked up the second album of records and looked for what she wanted; it was light enough to read the names if she held them close to her eyes. She soon found those she was looking for."

The young man looked doubtfully at Mr. Pinto and asked, "Do you know the music of Grieg?"

"A little of it," said Mr. Pinto. "He composed some Norwegian dances. One of them goes like this." And he whistled a bar or two, tunefully enough.

The young man snapped his fingers joyously and stepped lightly with adept feet on the swaying deck.

"That is it," he cried, and sang some strange-sounding words to the tune. "But Grieg did not make it. He heard it between a pine-forest and the sea and cleverly wrote it down. But it was made hundreds of years ago, when all the earth went dancing, except the trees, and their roots took hold of great rocks and twined round

the rocks so that they might not join the dance as they wished. For it was forbidden them, since they had to grow straight and tall that ships might be made out of them."

The young man checked himself. "I was telling you about the Pomfrets," he said.

"Joan found these dances that she loved, and played first one and then the other. She made them all dance to the music, though they did not know what steps were in it, nor in what patterns they should move. But the tunes took them by the heels and they pranced and bowed and jumped, laughing all the time. Old Pomfret capered in the middle, kicking his legs, and twirling round like a top. And he laughed; how he laughed! And when he had done shaking with laughter he would start to dance again.

" 'This is too good for Mother to miss,' he said, 'we must wake her and make her dance too.' So they woke Mrs. Pomfret, and there being then six of them they made some kind of a figure and started to dance in earnest. Mrs. Pomfret, once she began, moved as lightly as any of them except Joan, who was like thistledown on the grass and moonlight on the edge of a cloud.

"And then, as the music went on, they found that they were dancing in the proper patterns, for they had partners who had come from nowhere, who led them first to the right and then to the left, up the middle and down the sides, bowing, and knocking their heels in the air. As the tune quickened they turned sometimes head over heels, even Mrs. Pomfret, who held her sides and laughed to see old Pomfret twirling on one toe. And the gramophone never stopped, for a little brown man was sitting by it and now and again turning the handle, and singing loudly as he sat.

"So they danced while the sky became lighter and turned from grey to a shining colour like mackerel; and

then little clouds like roses were thrown over the silver, and at last the sun himself, daffodil gold, all bright and new, shot up and sent the other colours packing.

"And everybody shouted and cheered like mad, and for a minute danced more wildly than ever, turning catherine-wheels, fast and faster in a circle, or shouting 'Hey!' and 'Ho!' and 'Ahoi! Ahoi! Ahoi!'

"Then they sank to the ground exhausted, and the Pomfrets looked at their partners who had come from nowhere; and were suddenly amazed.

" 'Well, I'm damned!' said old Pomfret, and all the little brown men rolled on the grass and laughed as though they would burst.

" 'Oh, they're the Wee Folk, the Peerie[1] Men!' cried Joan, delightedly, clapping her hands. 'Peerie Men, Peerie Men, I've found you at last!'

"And again the little men laughed and hugged themselves on the grass. By and by, still laughing, they drew together and talked among themselves very earnestly, and then the biggest of them, who was as tall as a man's leg to the mid-thigh, went forward, saying his name was Ferriostok, and made a little speech explaining how delighted they were to entertain such charming guests on Eynhallow; and would they please to come in for breakfast?

"Some pushed aside the stone on which the gramophone had been standing and, as though it were the most natural thing in the world, the Pomfrets went down rock stairs to a long, sandy hall, lit greenly by the sea, and full, at that time, of the morning song of the North Tide of Eynhallow. They sat down, talking with their hosts, and then two very old little men brought stone cups full of a yellow liquor that smelt like honey and the first wind after frost. They tasted it, curiously, and old Pomfret —he was a brewer, you know—went red all over and said

[1] Peerie. Little.

loudly, 'I'll give every penny I have in the world for the recipe!' For he guessed what it was.

"And the little men laughed louder than ever, and filled his cup again. One said, 'The Great King offered us Almain for it eleven hundred years ago. We gave him one cup for love, and no more. But you, who have brought that music with you, are free to our cellar. Stay and drink with us, and to-night we shall dance again.'

"No one of them had any thought of going, for it was heather ale they drank. Heather ale! And the last man who tasted it was Thomas of Ercildoune. It was for heather ale that the Romans came to Britain, having heard of it in Gaul, and they pushed northward to Mount Graupius in search of the secret. But they never found it. And now old Pomfret was swilling it, his cheeks like rubies, because Joan had brought back to the Peerie Men the music they had lost six hundred years before, when their oldest minstrel died of a mad otter's bite.

"Disney was talking to an old grey seal at the sea-door, hearing new tales of the German war, and Joan was listening to the Reykjavik story of the Solan Geese which three little men told her all together, so excited they were by her beauty and by the music she had brought them. At night they danced again, and Joan learnt the Weaving of the Red Ware, the dance that the red shore-seaweed makes for full-moon tides. The Peerie Men played on fiddles cut out of old tree-roots, with strings of rabbit-gut, and they had drums made of shells and rabbit-skins scraped as thin as tissues with stone knives. They hunt quietly, and that is why the rabbits are frightened of silence, but were not afraid of the Pomfrets, who made a noise when they walked. The Peerie Men's music was thin and tinkly, though the tunes were as strong and sweet as the heather ale itself, and always they turned again to the gramophone which Joan had brought, and danced as madly as peewits in April, leaping like winter spray, and clapping their heels high in the air. They danced

the Merry Men of Mey and the slow sad Dance of Lofoden, so that everybody wept a little. And then they drank more ale and laughed again, and as the sun came up they danced the Herring Dance, weaving through and through so fast that the eye could not follow them.

"Now this was the third sunrise since the Pomfrets had gone to the island, for the first day and the second night and the second day had passed like one morning in the sandy hall of the Little Men; so many things were there to hear, and such good jokes an old crab made, and so shockingly attractive was a mermaid story that the afternoon tide told. Even the sand had a story, but it was so old that the Peerie Men themselves could not understand it, for it began in darkness and finished under a green haze of ice, and since the Pomfrets were so busy there they heard no sound of the chauffeur's visit and the Peerie Men said nothing of it. They had taken below all the rugs and cushions and hampers and gramophone records, and brushed the grass straight, so that no trace was left of the Midsummer dancing—except the tag of Joan's stocking-suspender, which was overlooked, so it seems.

"The old grey seal told them, in the days that followed, of all that was going on by land, and even Mrs. Pomfret laughed to hear of the bustle and stir they had created. There was no need, the Peerie Men found, to make them hide when more searchers came, for none of the Pomfrets had any wish to be found. Disney said he was learning something about the sea for the first time in his life (and he had followed the sea all his life), and Norah sang Iceland cradle-songs all day. Old Pomfret swilled his ale, glowing like a ruby in the green cave, and Joan——Joan was the queen of the Peerie Men, and the fosterling of the old grumbling sand, and the friend of every fish that passed by the sea-door. And at night they danced, to the music of tree-root fiddles and pink shell-drums, and above all to the music which you think was made by Grieg. They danced, I tell you! . . ."

The young man tossed up his arms and touched his fingers above his head; he placed the flat of his foot on the calf of the other leg; twirled rapidly on his toes. "Danced, I say! Is there anything in the world but dancing?" And he clapped his heels together, high in the air, first to one side then to the other, singing something fast and rhythmic and melodious.

Mr. Pinto coughed nervously—he was feeling cold—and said: "That is an extraordinarily interesting story. But, if you will pardon my curiosity, do you mind telling me what reason you have for thinking that this actually happened to Mr. Pomfret and his friends?"

"Reason!" said the young man, staring at him. His hair blew out on the wind like a black banner, and he laughed loud and melodiously.

"This reason," he said, "that I am Otto Samways!" And he turned, very neatly, a standing somersault on the deck and came up laughing.

"They sent me away to buy something," he said, "and when I have bought it I am going back to Eynhallow to dance the Merry Men, and the Herring Dance, and the Sea Moon's Dance with Joan."

And once again he sang, very melodiously, and turned a rapid series of catherine-wheels along the deck.

"To buy what?" shouted Mr. Pinto, as he disappeared.

"Gramophone needles!" bellowed the young man, laughing uproariously.

# THE HAG OF AUVERGNE[1]

*By* J. B. MORTON

From *The New Statesman*

I was surprised once by nightfall in the hill country of Auvergne. Being tired and hungry, and in a desolate place, I was glad to see a house and a light. I knocked at the door, and was told that I should find an excellent bed and good food and wine in a remote village two or three miles away. Off I went, slogging along in the darkness. Just when I had begun to think that some twist in the track had led me wrong, I emerged on to a kind of sunken road, which led into a tumbledown village. With a sinking heart I signalled out the only possible shelter, an evil dwarf of a place: drab, misshapen, and apparently deserted. When I had hammered on the door for some time, there was a sound of unbolting, and a hag peered at me, holding above her tousled head a stinking lamp that smoked and spat. Her teeth were black as night, and very scarce. Her whole bearing terrified me, and something sinister within the house made itself known to me. She stared in silence, and as there was nothing for it but to take what I could get, I smiled at her as though the look of her had pierced my heart (it had, by God!). And, as though I were intoxicated with her bizarre beauty and the comforts of her establishment, I asked for food and lodging. She did not speak, and I took her for a dumb witch. But she motioned me within, shut the door, and showed me into a frowsy room, lit only by a second of her special stink-lamps.

[1] Copyright, 1929, by J. B. Morton.

"If this is fairyland," said I to myself, "the poets have exaggerated, as usual."

As I stood awkwardly, wondering what would happen next, the monster spoke, and in a voice so gentle and so musical that I knew without doubt the Devil was in the business. She offered me what food there was, but as to the bed, said she, that was a more difficult matter.

"You see," she said in that sweet voice of hers, "you see, the fact is that during the season—and we are now in full season—there's a great run on the house." (What sort of a triple fool did she take me for?) "My house has a reputation, as is clear from the fact that you, surely a stranger, have chosen it. This very day, sir, I have been all but eaten bare by the great concourse of travellers and tourists. Every April it is the same story. I fear I shall have to enlarge my house at once. I have long had improvements in mind."

Here she paused and sighed, and I nodded hastily. The hag! Here was I, in April, without a traveller within miles of me, in a twopenny unheard-of village, having my ears filled with this nonsense about the season and the concourse of travellers!

However, I was half mad with hunger and fatigue, so I humoured her. I waited anxiously for what she would say next.

"I can arrange, possibly, a little soup," she said, "and perhaps a trifle of something else. But the bed—you see, one is so crowded out. There are the two gentlemen from Paris; there is the lady from Castelnaudary, who sings so well. There is the Polish gentleman—yes, so many guests."

She ticked them off on her fingers.

"I will see if a corner can be found," she said.

Madness! The house can have had no more than a kitchen, an eating-room and two, or perhaps three other rooms in it.

She went out into a dark kitchen, shutting the door. I waited, and presently she returned and set before me one

of the filthiest meals it has ever fallen to my lot to eat. The soup was lukewarm grease in a chipped plate; there was a hunk of horse-meat and two old apples. I tried to wash it all down with some plentifully watered red wine.

When this agony was over, I lit my pipe and began to think of all the good meals of the world, and all the comfort of the rich travellers I had so often abused. And while I mused the hag stood behind my chair, a few feet away from me. Now and then she crept about the room, like a cat, stealthily. For a long time I tried to take no notice of her, but I could feel her eyes upon me ever and again. It made me first ill-at-ease, and then angry and frightened, and the more I thought of the night I had to pass under her beastly roof, the more uncomfortable I became. Perhaps, thought I, it would be wiser to pay for the so-called meal, and go out and walk all night. I had done that before, but the prospect was not attractive. Finally she got me into such a state of nerves that I turned and said, as confidently as I could:

"Madame, I hope I am not keeping you up."

"No, no," said she. "In any case I have to wait up for my other guests."

"They are not in yet?"

"Oh, no. They are always up to some gaiety or other. They will return when they are tired. But they will not disturb you. They will go quietly to their beds—the pleasure-lovers!"

All this talk was so fantastic that I almost laughed aloud. The village consisted of, I suppose, ten houses and a few barns and byres, and here was she asking me to believe that people came here as they would to a town with a casino and a dozen dance-clubs!

"There's much pleasure, now," she continued. "When I was young it was different. One went to bed earlier. But, mark you, we of Auvergne have never been against a bit of fun. Innocent fun, it is understood."

I was growing drowsy, but I realized suddenly why she

was standing over me like this. It was all part of her miserable bluff. She was gaining time. The thing was to get me to bed early and then sit up herself, in order to persuade me that she was waiting to let in her guests, when they returned from their innocent revels in this hotbed of gaiety. It occurred to me at once that it might be interesting to oppose her plan; simply to sit there smoking until she wearied of the whole business, and had to confess herself beaten. But it was not worth while. I was too tired, and I was sick of her presence.

Then she spoke again, in that golden and silver voice that the Devil had lent her for his purpose.

"Seeing that you are a traveller," she said, "and have come far, you must be tired. Have you other luggage besides this sack? It has just this moment occurred to me that there's one room vacant. How thoughtless of me to have forgotten it. The rush confuses one, does it not?"

"It does," said I.

"I will, if you please, show you to your room," said she.

So I gave in, and was led up a narrow, creaking, mouldering rickety, perilous staircase into a frowsy room with a small patch of tattered carpet spread on dirty boards. A blackened blodge of candle was thrust into my hand, and the crazy door was shut. I heard her shuffling down, and I guessed that she would give me long enough to undress and go to sleep, before going to bed herself.

I prised open the window that was loose in its decayed sashes, and then I lay on top of the bed in my clothes, with my pack for pillow. Before I fell asleep I heard her coming slowly and carefully up the stairs. Somewhere in the abominable house a door squeaked and shut, and then all was quiet.

I was awake early, and downstairs in the uncertain light of a drizzling morning, having decided to go on my way without waiting another moment under that rotting roof. The morning smelt clean and cool, and I longed for the rain, but when I asked for my bill, all the fuss broke out again.

"It is, you see, the season," she said; "one is, of course, always only too pleased to accommodate travellers, and one takes what pains one can to make them comfortable. But it's not easy, especially when there is food and a room to be prepared late at night, and all the concourse of travellers to be satisfied—the two Parisians, the Polish gentleman, and so forth. And my household staff is depleted. My son is away, and my chambermaid is ill. It is difficult."

Did she not know that I would have paid a hundred francs gladly to get clear of the place?

"Give me my bill, please," I said.

"In more normal times," said she, "I could take you at a more reasonable charge, but as it is, one has to live, and it is the season, after all. Therefore, considering the trouble and the room and the food, I cannot charge you, sir, less than eight francs."

In announcing this sum, she put all the alluring music of which she was master into her voice. She might have been asking for twenty pounds, so anxiously did she watch my face.

She, no doubt, expected me to wrangle, and to tell her it was too stiff, but I longed to be in the fresh air, so I paid up, leaving her, if she cared, to think me a reckless young spendthrift.

And so I left this fashionable resort and went out into the rain, while she watched me from the open door. I looked back, and saw the wretched hovels of the village, right out of the way of any traveller, and made more dreary by the morning mist. And of all the broken-down houses, that of my late hostess was the worst; the most scandalously dilapidated. But such nightmares fade quickly. The morning rain was meat and drink to me, and I was soon singing my way across a vast heath, like a boy let out of school.

I had to walk a long way before I found my refreshment in a happy little village, with the sun shining and the birds singing.

# "JOHN GLADWIN SAYS . . ." [1]

*By* OLIVER ONIONS

From *The London Magazine*

If we are to believe John Gladwin, the oncoming car made no attempt to avoid him, but held straight on. It held on at top speed, he says, for the first he saw of it was the sudden blinding gold of the afternoon sun on its screen, almost on top of him. He was not wool-gathering or thinking of anything else at the time, and he has been for years a teetotaler. As for there not being any other car there at all, he naturally scouts the idea, for if there had been no other car why should he have made that violent and instinctive swerve? He did swerve; something hurtled past him; into the hedge and through it he and his car plunged; and where a moment before the white secondary road had run straight as a ruler for miles, he found himself on soft green, startled out of his wits, still at the wheel, his screen unbroken, his engine still running.

He says that his first thought was this—people ought not to drive like that. All was quiet on the road behind him, but the fellow could hardly be out of sight yet. John Gladwin came to life. He climbed as quickly as he was able out of the car and pushed through the hole he had made in the hedge.

Properly speaking, he had not come through the hedge at all. He had broken through a thin part of it, a gap, thinly tangled over, and his car had come to rest on an old grass-grown track beyond. He looked first down the long white road. There was no sign of any other car, and no

[1] Copyright, 1929, by George Oliver.

other roads ran into it. Then he looked at his own wheel marks in the dust, and they rather scared him. Heavens! What a mercy he had been crawling along! It would be just as well to report a lunatic who drove like that.

But what was there to report, except that golden flash, gone in a moment, the empty road, and his own tracks in the dust?

He scrambled back through the broken hedge and climbed into the car again. At any rate, he was alive.

Something had happened to the car none the less. The lever would not go into reverse. Again and again he tried; it went with ease into the other speeds, but not into the one that would take him out backwards again into the road he had left. He got out and set his shoulder to the car, but that was a younger man's job, and the car remained immovable. Then he looked ahead, and thought he saw the best thing to do.

Old Harkness Bottom he knew the region to be called, and from the pocket of the car he fetched out the map. It was an old map, mounted on linen, in tatters with much use, but it told him what he wanted to know. Harkness itself—New Harkness the older people still called it—lay away over the hill and out of sight, and New Harkness was almost a bustling sort of place. A tarred main road ran through it, with traffic at all hours, and a church already old, as new churches go, with its shrine and flowers at the lychgate, and its tablet with the names of seven Harkness lads inside. But nobody ever went near Old Harkness. Something had happened about the price of corn, and its very stones had been carted away to make the new village.

But there was probably a way through, and out again beyond, and John Gladwin, unable to go back, decided to go forward.

On the left of the green lane along which he bumped rose a rough slope covered with ragwort and thistles, and on his right he brushed another hedge so closely that clusters of berries, vivid and rank, scarlet and bright green and glossy

black all on the same bunch, broke off and fell into the car, with strippings of deadly-nightshade and fat-fruited bryony. Swish, snap, rip; it was far from being a new car, and a loose mudguard rattled, and the head-lamps vibrated with the jolting. For half a mile or so he drove, winding now to the left, now to the right. And then suddenly he came upon a whole world of palest pinkish-silver.

It rose steeply round three sides of a deep dell—the seeding willow-herb, deadly-soft wreathed, billowing, with here and there a maple of a gold so vibrant that the eye was almost sensible of a twang. A week or two before it must have been a dyer's vat of the flagrant purple; now the very air was thickened with the fleece of its procreation.

And down in the Bottom, in the only patch the weed had not invaded, stood a church.

John Gladwin would hardly have known it was a church, he says, if it had not been for the tombstones. There were perhaps a score of these, lying and leaning at all angles, and some of them were not stones at all, but nameboards of ancient wood, with finials sticking up at the ends like prick-ears, John Gladwin says. As for the church—well, there it was, what remained of it, that wrecked and ivied hummock in the middle of the field. The gap into the field had no gate. John Gladwin imagines he must have stopped his engine, for this pink and silver bowl in the hills was filled with an immense quiet. He got out of the car. Picking his way among the tombstones he pushed through coarse grass to the ruin.

The stone-movers had been there, too, John Gladwin says, for half of the broken buttress over which he clambered had gone; but that ragged "V" against the sky where the belfry had been had probably fallen down of itself. He could only just force his way in for brambles and tangled rose, and a mountain ash filled the chancel, its berries already turning red. The whole church was not more than fifteen strides long. A greenish semi-darkness filled it, says John Gladwin.

And over all brooded that stillness, not of peace (he says), but of the desolation of things lost to the world. He started when, with a harsh beating of wings, a thrush flew out of the chancel where the mountain ash was.

But he jumped nearly a foot into the air when, loud and immediately above his head, there clanged out the single stroke of a bell.

Of course, he knew there was no bell. The nearest bell was the thin-noted bell of New Harkness Church, away over the hill, and anyway, its sound would have passed unheard overhead. Nevertheless, John Gladwin looked up. And naturally he saw only the ragged "V" where once a bell had been.

And then the note came again, urgent and earnest, as if it summoned somebody to make haste. John Gladwin, suddenly remembering that he was in a church, took off his hat.

The bell that wasn't there rang a third time, and he bent his knee and crossed himself. As he did so he heard his name spoken behind him.

Now the most astounding statement of a number that John Gladwin makes is that of a sudden all this seemed reasonable, and natural, and right. Indubitably there had been a bell in that crumbling "V" above his head. It had had its own voice, earnest and urgent and compelling. But in another moment he had forgotten all about the bell, he says. What was a bell by the side of the voice that had called him by his name? It was a young voice, of a lingering sweetness, that finished each syllable exquisitely and had always moved John Gladwin past telling. It took him back more than thirty years—and already John Gladwin was fifty-eight years old when he says all this happened. And then the voice spoke his name again.

"John!"

This time he did not turn round, as a minute or two before he had looked up at that startling ringing of the bell. What, he asks, is the use of turning round to see something

that is as much you as your heart itself? Instead, he replied to the voice, and his own tones shook with a still passion of tenderness.

"Emily!"

"So you were able to come?"

"I was not able to stay away."

"You rode over on Grey Boy?"

"Yes, most loved."

"I have his piece of sugar. It is in my muff."

"How beautiful you are!"

"Am I?"

"Have you no kiss for me?"

And the voice said:

"Hush—we are in a church."

She had always been like that, John says, sweet and circumspect, decorous and right, so that those other moments, when there had been no need for circumspection, had been by contrast unutterably full. And when a love like that has been it still is, and dies only with the heart it has visited. So in that sense I should say that every word John Gladwin says is to be believed. He was in a church with her once more, with Grey Boy contentedly cropping in the adjoining pasture. Not the leprous silver of the willow-herb disgraced the hill outside, but the corn whispering in the sun, and the horseless reaper left where it was until Monday morning. He was less aware of the hymn-book they shared than of her hand so near to his own; and he wore a cravat, and she an adorable little bonnet with ribbands, and a flounced skirt with a waterfall behind. And John Gladwin says that it did not seem to be any particular Sunday. The Sundays seemed to run together, he says, as snowy Christmases run together in our memories, and sunny summers, and indistinguishable daisy-fields, that somehow seem the same daisies year after year. But there came suddenly into his head a Sunday that did stand out from the rest. As plainly as he had heard the bell he heard the parson's voice again, pronouncing his name with hers who

sat there in the square pew so consciously glowing by his side.

"I publish the Banns of Marriage——"

There was a rustle in the mountain-ash that filled the chancel; the thrush had returned. Through a fissure where the ivy had forced the stones apart two butterflies could be seen at play. Morsels of fleece settled on John Gladwin's new black arm-band, and something stirred among the thigh-deep nettles. But to John Gladwin it was her voice again. Thrice the Banns had been proclaimed, and none had known of any let or impediment.

"So now you can hardly run away!" the voice laughed.

"Away! Where, away from you, when you are everywhere?"

"So that's what you mean when you say I am the world to you!"

"You are both worlds, the bread I eat and the prayers I say."

"Listen to him, Grey Boy! Did ever you hear such a man?"

"We are not in a church now, love. Have you no kiss for me?"

And the remembered kiss was as fresh to John Gladwin as on the day it had been given.

At this point John Gladwin admits to a certain confusion as to what was really happening. His actual surroundings, he says, stood out clearly enough before his eyes. Looking up he saw the gap where the bell had been; looking out of the breach by which he had entered he saw the spilth of silver seed, the raw gold of the maples, his car not a hundred yards away. But in some way he cannot explain the things he saw were doubled with other things, just as, by mechanical ingenuity, pictures are imposed on pictures and made to come and go. It was, he says, as if one looked at a half-obliterated sketch and saw brightly through it, drawing nearer and nearer, a golden-hued irradiation behind.

Unfortunately, to question him too closely is to confuse

him and make him give different answers. He acknowledges, for example, that he is not a Harkness man, and that his Banns were never called in Old Harkness Church. It was in a church two hundred miles away that they were published. But Holy Church, he says, is one, no matter where the location of its fabric, and wedding-bells are the same, whether they be a merry peal or a single blithe note. For it was his marriage, he says, that that vanished bell next gave tongue to.

Not nettles and brambles, but guests filled the church, the friends of the bride on the one side, those of the groom on the other. The gilded pipes of the little organ reared themselves among the berries of the mountain-ash. The fissure where the butterflies played healed itself, and there floated into its place the white marble tablet of Henry Gladwin, Justice of the Peace, benefactor of the church, and owner of acres, long before things happened about the price of corn. The altar was raised again, a roof of oak shut out the September sky, John Gladwin says. And she came in on her father's arm and was brought to where he waited. She wore her great-grandmother's lace, that lace that had outlasted herself, and never, the village declared, had bride looked lovelier.

And John Gladwin thinks that as he stood there, as one might say in two churches at once, he saw something no man has seen before—two faces also at once, not as one sees them in some old album, with the gradations of the years coming calmly and imperceptibly in between, but vividly and violently contrasted, the unwrinkled face side by side with the wrinkled one, the veined hand by the flower-smooth one, and nothing to account for the fading and change. And one face was shrouded in lavendered lace, and the other had lain now a week in another shroud. The two faces looked together at him, different yet the same, as his love had been different yet the same. She had neither utterly died nor utterly grown old. Something as inalienable as her name had persisted throughout—Emily.

So she said "I will," that day, and there was a hush, because they were in a church.

John Gladwin says that he saw himself, too. He saw himself in a pouting grey cravat and beautiful tubular trousers, and he was straight-backed then and strong-limbed, and could, if need be, walk his thirty miles in a day instead of being glad of a coughing old two-seater to trundle him about. But he did not see himself twice over, side by side, as he had seen her, for what was there to look at in the John Gladwin who stood that afternoon among the brambles that choked Old Harkness Church, friendless, alone, and very tired? Life was a thing to look back on, not forward to, and now, in his unique experience, he had nothing but thanks for that mad driver who, dashing past him with a flash of gold, had pushed him through the hedge and into the old lane. He heard the organ in the mountain-ash again, and the words joined in of themselves—"The voice that breathed o'er Eden that earliest wedding day." He saw the throng at the sunny church door, saw the waiting carriage and the coloured favours of the horses, the showers of rice, an old shoe. He says he turned himself about in Old Harkness Church and actually saw these things, and not merely his old two-seater waiting for him beyond the overturned tombstones. If they were not there, he says, he saw them none the less.

But some richness of light had passed away from the golden maples, a tarnish had come over the silver of the shedding weed. One could hardly have imagined a greater stillness than before, and yet the pause and hush seemed intensified, John said, as he suddenly remembered a pause and hush in his life before. Here again he admits to a certain amount of confusion. He was no longer in a church, but in his own office or study, where he kept his guns and account books, and received his rent from his tenants, regaling them in the cleared barn afterwards with beef and beer. He had taken off his boots, quite unnecessarily, since his walking about could not possibly have been heard; and

sometimes his brown hands were clasped together before him, and sometimes they touched grain samples or farm plans, or his magnifying-glass, or a strap, or some other of the objects that littered the room. He was waiting with tense nerves for news from upstairs—news of Emily.

It was brought to him, less by the doctor's words than by his shining face. The child was a boy, and all was well. John Gladwin pulled his boots on again, and put his hand to the little porcelain bell-knob by the side of the mantlepiece. Wine and glasses were brought—and then, without warning, he says, he was back in the church again. He was standing by the font, and when the priest said "Name this child," John Gladwin answered "George," and by that name he was baptised in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

And a year and a half later it happened again, and the name this time was William.

John Gladwin says quite frankly that he is by no means certain as to what came next. As the light had died out of the maples, so the pictures became a little less distinct, a little more run together. Perhaps that was because on the whole his life had been a peaceful and eventless one. He had brought up his two sons in the fear of the Lord. On Sundays, in the square pew, and while they were yet quite small, he had had to tell them to hush, because they were in a church; and as they grew older, and those things began to happen about the price of corn, and the lads shot up to the height of their mother's waist, and then to her breast, churchgoing lads they remained, as was right in the successors of that Henry Gladwin whose tablet in white marble looked down on the pew from the fissure where the butterflies were no longer at play.

John had not noticed the departure of the butterflies; butterflies go everywhere; and neither had he noticed the further sombring of the maples, nor the change of light that turned the pink of the willow-herb silver to a whitey-

brown. He was still, he supposed, half in a church two hundred miles away, and the Sabbaths ran together as the snowy Christmases had run together, and the hot summers and the daisied fields, and the birthdays of the boys. He was troubled about the boys, he says. The price of corn was becoming less and less what it should have been. The marble Henry Gladwin, gazing steadfastly from the wall into the square pew, might presently find one the boys missing. Probably it would be George, the elder one. He spoke of Canada and South Africa. And it might be a good thing, for it was not right that John Gladwin's labourers only should bear the brunt of a period of agricultural depression. John talked with Emily about it.

"But you have had an offer for the shooting, John," she said again, now in Old Harkness Church.

"Which I shall take, but it is only delaying matters for another year. It is no remedy."

"George only wants to go because he thinks it may ease matters."

"George is not the only one who is going."

"And then I suppose William will want to go after him."

John Gladwin vows that he heard all this again, in the broken church in Old Harkness Bottom.

"We must do what we can do. And if you are going to read let me get your glasses."

But as things chanced it was neither Canada nor South Africa that took George and William. If John Gladwin is to be believed, that vanished bell against the now unnaturally hued sky spoke loudly once again. And, knowing now what was happening, he did not jump a foot into the air this time. Quietly he sank to his knees among the nettles.

"Let them go," he said with bowed head. "I will go, too. We shall all be needed."

"John!" she says, her voice rang sharply out. "They

cannot take them! They did not bear them! They are mine!"

"They will go laughing. You will not be able to keep them."

"But I shall be alone!"

"There is nursing. There is cooking. I will find you something to do."

And again, says John Gladwin, the bell rang warningly out, as if to summon the women as well as the men.

But in the end neither did he find anything for her to do, nor yet anything for himself. They wanted captains of twenty-five, not forty-five, they said, and he must wait his turn. Youngest and best first; and go George and William did. Shortly after, John Gladwin, seizing an occasion, sold his land two hundred miles away, and brought his wife south, and settled her in a small house not far from Harkness, and himself became a special constable, since that was all they seemed able to find him to do.

And now, though he was on his knees, he was not in a place that at all resembled a church, but in some dim twilight of mud and flashes, and roaring and death, that naturally he could not see clearly, because he had never been there. An occasional "Pretty hectic" was all he could get out of the letters of his sons, varied once in a while with a jest about its healthiness. The light through the brambles and the mountain-ash became of a more sullen green. The wall-tablet of Henry Gladwin, John says, dissolved away, and another slid relentlessly into its place. This one was of oak, with names upon it in gold, and there was one exactly like it in New Harkness Church, as well as where John Gladwin knelt. Even the names were the same:

GEORGE GLADWIN.

WILLIAM GLADWIN.

They were the first two of the seven. The names only survived. What had become of the rest of them neither John Gladwin nor anybody else knew.

A low muttering filled the air. It was the first rumble of the storm. There was a pale flash, like the flash of a shell in daylight, and if John Gladwin wanted to get home before it came he had best put his hood up and begone. But he remained where he was, so still that the very field-mice might have approached him. Then the muttering was no longer a muttering. Suddenly the heavens cracked and pealed harshly above his head. A chill gust filled the air with fleece, and a bright flash showed every leaf and berry of the ash. But between it and the crash that followed John Gladwin says he heard another voice, the voice of the white-haired New Harkness vicar, who had put the names of John Gladwin's sons in gold on the wall.

"We bring nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. . . . The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. . . . We, therefore, commit her body to the ground. . . . Not to be sorry, as men without hope. . . ."

Three days before the words had been spoken, and John Gladwin says he heard their very vibrations still.

"Amen," he said, with bowed head, and rose as the first great drop struck his bare crown like a falling pebble.

He was hardly out of the church when the rain crashed down. Every broken tombstone was hidden in a mist and spray of it. The maples were not to be seen, the craven silver of the weed seemed to cower under its thrashing. Rivers coursed between the old graves, and at the gap where the wedding-carriage had stood with favours on the horses and flowers in the lamps—it was John Gladwin's car that stood there, twanging like a drum and spouting out valances of water. Soaked to his spine, John Gladwin bent over the starting-handle. The

engine broke into a rattle. He climbed into the sodden seat, and set for a moment wondering whether he should turn round or go forward. He decided to go forward. A gate might close the old track at its other end, but he would risk it. The other would be miles round to where he wanted to be—standing before a gold-lettered name board, standing at a mound of earth three days old.

And John Gladwin says, and stands to it, that it was to the tolling of the bell of Old Harkness Church heard above the shout of the rain that he swayed and splashed in the car round the churchyard and skirted the beaten-down silver of the weeds.

First, he says, he found roofless buildings, then a solitary inhabited farm, and then a straggle of cottages along a cart-track, but ever getting nearer to the known world. Then, almost suddenly because of the rain, he saw the tree-line of the tarred main road. As suddenly, at the crest, the shower ceased as if an invisible hand had turned it off at the main. Swiftly the clouds packed themselves away behind him, and ahead there flashed on his eyes a dazzle of gold. It glittered on the still-showering branches; it made prisms in the air; and as John Gladwin swung out of the lane into the tarred main road he saw nothing but a glow of molten light. He says it was like looking into the middle of the Sun Himself.

And the manner of his going out of Old Harkness Bottom was as the manner of his entering it. I think myself that Death did not ride on a Pale Horse that afternoon, but took a trip in a Golden Car. John Gladwin was driving slowly; at his time of life he never did anything else. He never even saw what rushed towards him (he says), but only the effulgent road. And this time it was too late to swerve. It was just where the red and yellow petrol-pumps stood, backed by the coloured sheet-iron advertisements. New Harkness Church, with its shrine and lych-gate, was a bare hundred yards away. John Gladwin thinks, and says, that it was the same car as before.

The noise of the smash was heard by a Bentley, more than a mile away.

The Bentley came up and drew to a standstill. It had come from that direction, but it had met no other car. And it was the Bentley that took John Gladwin to the cottage hospital, with a broken back.

I myself have never been to Old Harkness Bottom, and have only John Gladwin's word for it that there is a church there at all. We go to see him where he lies. He lies on a white bedstead, with a white-uniformed nurse to make things easy for the remaining time, which we, like himself, hope won't be too long. And he tells us these things with dreadful candour of a man about to die.

But sometimes, with the screen at his feet and the chart over his head, without regard to where he is, in a red-roofed cottage hospital with white woodwork and a privet hedge round it, he breaks off with a gesture. His fingers go to his lips and his eyes steal round. He is in Old Harkness Bottom again, and for all I know his boys are being naughty once more.

"Hush!" he says reproachfully. "We are in a church!"

# A MAN OF LETTERS[1]

*By* SIR SQUIRE SPRIGGE, M.D.

From *The Cornhill Magazine*

I was at the book-stall when my usual train, scheduled to reach London in 35 minutes, was due. A fellow traveller whom I knew by sight came up to ask for the *Scrutator* and for some newspaper devoted to the raising of poultry, when his resentment at not being able to obtain what, I think, he described as the *Feathered Compendium* attracted my attention. In popular language he could have been termed peeved, and he seemed to have been peeved out of proportion to any disappointment that he had sustained. The recollection of this episode came back to me as I saw him on the platform, a day or two later, engaged in buying a journal which specialises in life-assurance statistics, while at the same time he left a commission for an expensive paper written in the interests of art collectors, and one that can seldom be obtained at suburban railway stalls. The man struck me as having wide and curiously assorted interests an impression that grew deeper when on another occasion I saw him buy the *Gardeners' Weekly Cyclopaedia,* what time he ordered the *Shell-Fishers' Budget.* He puzzled me.

His customary train being also mine, his appearance was familiar to me, and, as they occurred, I took the opportunities of watching him, for my curiosity was roused by the uncorrelated nature of the papers that he would ask for, and by his persistent impatience when he could not get what he should have had no expectation of getting. I noticed that he would seek to buy journals bear-

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ing titles which showed their association with all sorts of industries and tastes, and that as a rule he failed to obtain them. He would then leave orders for these, and buy other papers having no apparent connexion with his previous demands, and always with a display of pettishness.

One morning he inquired for a journal which no one could have hoped to purchase casually on any platform; it was the day of its publication, and, being a subscriber, I chanced to have a copy. I noted that he left no order for it; he had a modest appearance, and I judged that a high price had influenced him to abstain from his wonted procedure of leaving a commission, and that, although on impulse he might have dashed down his seven-and-sixpence, the delay imposed upon him had brought reflection.

So I offered my copy to him, saying that I would recover it from him at the terminus. He beamed gratitude at me, and got into the train, already tearing off the wrapper. At our destination he gave back the paper and thanked me for the little service with unnecessary emphasis, adding that of course he was going to buy a copy for himself. To these words he imparted an air of impressiveness, and for a moment I thought he was going to explain them, but what he added made his meaning no clearer. "That's a journal," he said, "that it's difficult to see unless you have a club, and of course buying the expensive organs on spec comes heavy. But I'm most deeply obliged." And he departed, leaving me with the feeling that he owed me some confidence which he regretted withholding.

He did not withhold it long. The acquaintance thus begun fortuitously was kept alive by morning salutations, and then the accident of our simultaneous arrival at the home station upon an evening train led to developments. We found ourselves leaving the station together. For part of our homeward journey we walked by the same roads,

and our conversation opened in a commonly blundering way.

"Tell me," I was saying, "what on earth——?"

"You must wonder what on earth—" he was saying.

We waited on each other and again commenced together, I to question him as to his zeal for newspapers, and he to inform me. We both laughed, and intercourse seemed to come easily. My curiosity hardly needed expression, so pleased was he to explain his omnivorous appetite. At the place where our parting was indicated he was still revealing himself with gusto, and he acquiesced readily in the proposal that he should turn aside and come as far as my house.

He continued his story over the tea-table, protesting that he should be proud of permission to keep me posted as to his future activities. The following is what I made of his narrative, supplemented by a little obvious surmising on my part.

It appeared that he was a clerk in a Government office, and of no particular standing in that office. He worked entirely under orders, and I perceived that the irresponsibility which thus resulted was a source of irritation to him; he was not of the temperament to enjoy the freedom from care which a bar to any initiative action brought to so many of his similars in the bureau. He wanted to express himself, and resentment at the perpetual inability to do so had grown on him.

"I'm only a cipher," he said, "in the office, but outside the office I count."

And this was how he counted. He had discovered an outlet for his feelings in a profuse correspondence addressed to all sorts of newspapers. Here he could select his subject, could say his say how and when he wished, and could count as a triumph accruing to himself each accepted contribution. When publicity resulted, though it was anonymous, it possessed the sweetness of having been brought about by personal effort; and thus he could

congratulate himself on directing the thought of his fellows in a private capacity, though his official occupation was servile.

He required no pressing in this process of self-revelation, and his confidences flowed from him much in the order in which I set them down here.

"There isn't a man in our office," he went on, "who could write a letter to the Press that would be attractive or instructive to the public"; and he expatiated with enthusiasm upon his self-appointed task, its admirable system, its responsibilities, its scope, and its fulfilment of a felt want. This last phrase over and over again. "I write a letter on what I like, at such times as I like, and I send it where I like. The editors can take it or leave it as they like."

As he made no claim to constant appearance in print I gathered that quite often they liked to leave it, and I asked if rejection did not produce annoyance on his side—if he did not feel that he had wasted his time.

"You don't know my system," he replied. "Nothing I write is wasted. It all gets printed sooner or later, and I am extending my connexion. I had three letters printed this week, and one of them had been sent previously to seventeen places. Of course that means industry and method. Industry and method, that's my slogan. I'm in my seventh hundred."

My expression of wonder at his fertility took the form of asking how the subjects came to present themselves to notice with sufficient frequency.

"There's no trouble about that," he replied. "I sense the public need: the events of to-day adumbrate my text for to-morrow." (I noticed that I was being addressed in the style which he employed for the approach of editors.) "The things to which newspapers just allude, and do no more than allude, are the very things which are worth stressing and worth developing for readers."

With the suggestion that he worked on a large range,

he agreed, "but," he said, "I do not have to search for subjects. To introduce your own subject to an editor is useless—it never interests them. They assume that they know what their readers want to hear about; in reality they know what they intend them to hear about. I take the subjects which they allude to—only to neglect, and infuse them with human interest. It's extraordinary how editors fail to get the things out and about, which the public want to know."

I surmised that many of the papers which I had seen him buy had large circulations, which went to support the judgments of their editors; but he asserted that their popularity would be even more marked if editors used industry and method to touch the heart of the people. "When editors say, 'Everybody knows' or 'We need not enter into detail' or 'Common sense tells us,' then is the time that I write a letter pointing out the things that they have omitted to say; they are sure to be things with the greatest attraction for the public. I have immense choice in this way; the things left undeveloped are so numerous that I sometimes shudder at the responsibilities that I assume."

His eyes shone and his face reddened as he spoke. Suddenly timidity overtook him, and, as he bade me good-bye, his request that I would honour him with a return visit, so that I might inspect his Press-cutting books, alternated with apologies for the length of his visit and for the personal nature of his confidences. And as he left my door he said impressively, "The human heart is good enough for me," the emphasis implying that there were people, notably editors, to whom the human heart made no appeal.

. . . . . .

Our acquaintance was not renewed immediately. Noyes —for that was his name—made a point of recognising the social gulf which separated the first-class from the third-class ticket-holder, and on the platform would never come

nearer to intimacy than a smile of recognition. But one morning I found myself in his carriage, an unusual concourse of travellers having levelled all distinctions. He was in a corner surrounded by acquaintances, whom, it seemed to me, he was passing in review while exchanging salutations.

"Curious thing, this about caterpillars," he remarked as the train started, opening out a popular print at a page which displayed some horrific depictions of insect life in various phases. "Curious thing how they do it, isn't it?" he asked, looking round the carriage with the air somewhat of a schoolmaster selecting one of a class for a test, and finally letting his gaze pause at one of my immediate neighbours.

"What is it now, Noyes?" asked the man addressed, as he glanced up from the perusal of his own sheet.

"Good old Noyes," exclaimed another traveller.

"Get it off, Noyes," said a third, closing his paper.

I began to guess what was going to happen. During the whole of our journey to London Noyes talked to us about caterpillars, consulting as his authority the flaming pages which lay open before him, and which contained a letter described by him as the source of wonderfully accurate information. He told us of eggs on an area as large as a shilling—all his illustrative points were homely—which were transformed into grubs of the size and appearance of printed notes of interrogation; he revelled in the story of each tiny grub eating five times its body weight in five hours—or was it five minutes? I do not pretend to repeat his figures accurately, although he adduced them with great particularity, while he urged us to think of the voracious army of caterpillars thus produced. His method was to read sentences from the letter, approve of them, and then use them as points for exposition. As we drew into the London station he was moving us with an eloquent elegy on the destroyed greenery that shortly before had enfolded the forest monarchs. He timed his

discourse perfectly, reaching this peroration as the journey came to an end.

During much of his disquisition he kept an inquiring eye on me, and I felt that he was wondering what impression he was creating in the mind of one who must have guessed that he was the author of the texts on which he was enlarging. He was making me a confederate in his plot for impressing the company, and he was uncertain how I should regard his trick of imposing his own views upon them. I accepted complicity by nodding my appreciation of his points; the deceit seemed to me slight, if it could contribute to his enjoyment of the position. It was for these moments, I guessed as he discoursed, that he lived. They accounted for the fanatical glow with which he had expatiated on his labours. He took the attention of the railway carriage as a sample of the interest which his writings aroused among the general public, and I am not sure that he erred.

After this experience I would often abandon my claim to a roomier seat on purpose to watch his manœuvres. On some mornings he was silent, for either he had not been allowed to contribute to the wisdom of the people by original essays, or no editor had assisted him by giving prominence to a theme on which he could harangue us with an eye to further propaganda. And though his deliveries were received occasionally with impatience, I noticed that, on the days when he had nothing to say, there would be an air among us of disappointed expectation. No doubt these breaks in procedure stimulated interest, and this was further maintained by his habit of prevading the train, dropping in now among one group and now among another in accordance, I thought, with some sort of design. He watched the passengers assort themselves, and by selecting a variety of audience lessened the risk of being accounted a bore, while obtaining larger opportunities of spreading his teaching.

He was, I saw, a popular character. He was not an

arrogant preacher; he inclined to be simply an imparter of facts. He took interruptions in good part, and welcomed them, for he was an astute debater when his facts were challenged or his deductions belittled. Indeed, where he thought that discussion would help him to emphasise some message that he had not delivered with fitting amplitude he could use plentiful wiles to obtain criticism. At the same time, his studied impartiality saved him from self-betrayal when he was in danger of showing too intimate a knowledge of the anonymous author's real meaning. And so the morning journeys were passed frequently by a carriage full of men in threshing out the views of Noyes as already printed, or in helping him to arrive at views which he might print later. And this we did at the instigation of Noyes while believing ourselves to be free agents in the matter.

. . . . . .

Our suburb was indifferently served by trains, and the shortcomings of the railway company put Noyes's pen to frequent exercise.

"For the fourth time our train has been late," he told me one evening as we left the station. "That makes the average lateness three minutes in less than six months. I wish to be just and I will allow that the figure is swollen by the fact that last night it was no less than twenty minutes behind time."

"Does it matter much?" I asked.

"To be twenty minutes behind time on a journey of thirty-five minutes! I consider that to constitute a breach of contract," he said sternly. "If it occurred only once a month and were the only default of the month it would mean an aggregate loss of time to the passengers, estimating the average number of people in the train as——"

I interposed. I knew the sort of calculations that were threatened, and I felt certain that Noyes was prepared to repeat some printed effusion, probably as a rehearsal for its reappearance.

"That's not what I meant," I said. "I agree that the delays are annoying even with these local trains, but it is only with great expresses, timed to catch boats or to make important connexions, that unpunctuality is serious."

I had hoped to arrest a gush of information, but rather I hastened a flood. For then he told me, with the minutest accuracy as to dates, how many times certain expresses, well advertised by our line, had failed to run to their time in the past month, and he astounded me with his familiarity with the Company's time-tables.

"How on earth can you remember all that?" I asked, and it was then that I fell in with a suggestion that I should accompany him home on a long promised return visit. "For in that way," he said, "I can prove my opportunities for knowing the facts about the trains."

I hoped that I should not put Mrs. Noyes out by arriving for tea without warning, and received the assurance that the wife of "a man of letters"—for thus he described himself with complete seriousness—was ready to meet a petty inconvenience. So in that character I was conducted to the door of a small house in a small street, where claims to niceness were made by every be-curtained bow-window, unnecessary gable and finicking balustrade. The strip of garden between us and an entrance, over which was painted a number in bold characters, was tidy, but held no ordered mass of blossoms like that which lay before the adjoining tenements. We paused in the few yards of path for Noyes to explain that his evenings were too fully taken up by literary work to allow time "to pursue husbandry"—his actual phrase—and he pointed out that the conspicious figures above the portal had replaced the words "Mon Abri," the removal of which had formed the text of a letter to the paper which he held to be one of his most telling contributions.

"You can believe I was glad to be anonymous in that case," he said. "My neighbours are all resident in houses

termed 'The Pines,' 'Mon Repos,' 'Belvoir,' and so on; they were annoyed at the way in which the subject was treated."

Mrs. Noyes, a young middle-aged woman with a comely worried face, extended to her husband's friend a welcome, properly expressed, but colourless. Her husband had often spoken of me, I learned, and was grateful for the interest which I took in him. She apologised for the limited space of the room in which we were to sit down to tea. And, indeed, it was a mere cupboard, below the smudged window of which ran a railway cutting, judging by the roar beneath us which burst out as we entered the room.

"I told you I had every opportunity of knowing about the trains," Noyes said, and as he pursued the subject during tea to the accompaniment of similar outbursts, I learned that the untiring fellow had calculated not only from the figures of the time-tables, but from actual visits to the intermediate stations and from inquiries made of drivers and porters, exactly at what moment many of the principal trains, both non-stopping expresses and others, were due to pass below his house. While he was talking a small boy appeared at the table, and Noyes paused to introduce him as "a chip of the old block," but continued his railway statistics, and each time that the house rocked, while clouds of smoke rolled up before the windows, the phenomena brought consultation of his watch, and such comments as "the 6.9 down, due here at 6.48 and practically on time," or "she's due in town at 6.20 and won't make it." His surprising knowledge he explained by saying that we were sitting in what used formerly to be his writing-room, but the proximity of the railway traffic had disturbed him. "So we changed the rooms round," he went on, "for as my work developed and my system came into full action, I required more space and more quiet, while after all"—this with an air of stating a truism—"you only want a table and some chairs for meals, and a little noise is no matter."

I noticed that his wife, on greeting me, had not expressed any gratitude for my interest in her husband's activities, and now she abstained from any approval of his views on the allotment of space in their house. It was clear that Noyes's literary work did not yield a common pleasure, and once when he brought the little boy into the conversation as "one who has often been a source of real inspiration to me," her irritation was hardly suppressed, and she prevented the child from replying. No one at the tea-table was at ease, save Noyes, and I was glad when he rose and proposed adjournment to what he termed (of course) his "sanctum."

This proved to be a largish apartment in the front of the house, and at the first glance it became clear that Noyes in deed as well as in word took his pursuit of letters seriously. On a long trestle table a quantity of newspapers were arranged in bundles bearing different letters of the alphabet obviously indicating some code. Two shelves ran the whole length of one wall. Of these the upper was half full of large numbered scrap-books: the lower was loaded with volumes including, I could see, an array of dictionaries, not all of the cheaper sort; there were many volumes of the kind which contain alphabetised information upon 'ologies, arts, and crafts. I noticed also several varieties of atlas, two or three of the more modest encyclopædias, a concordance, and a heterogeneous row of reference books. Ink, red and black, a tray of fasteners, a bottle of paste, and several fountain-pens were surrounded on the table by notebooks, paper and envelopes of various sizes; while at one end stood a typewriter and a postal balance, and at the other a rack in which were arranged a dozen or more scrap-books similar to those on the upper shelf.

"My tools," said Noyes, waving his hand comprehensively round the room. "Nothing is more conducive to well-executed work than to have under the hand the necessary tools, and I pride myself upon the standard of my pro-

ductions." He seemed to expand in the atmosphere of his sanctum; he strode to the shelves with an assertive gait quite different from that which marked his walk on the platforms; and it was with glittering eye and resonant voice that he introduced his system to me, repeating impressively the words "Industry and method."

Certainly he was relentlessly industrious and patiently methodical. The scrap-books which he took down for my inspection fell into two classes: in one class they were filled with cuttings of his own printed work; in the other they contained scraps, printed or manuscript, filed in expectation of future activities. Every volume in both the classes was elaborately indexed in view of an attack upon the correspondence columns of the press at large. I observed frequent entries under similar headings, but "I never hesitate to repeat myself," he said, "and often a new subject can be treated in an old way."

The headings of those letters which had received publication were annotated not only with the dates and places of appearance, but also with the names of the various papers to which they had been submitted before they came to rest. Long and devious often were the flights before acceptance was achieved.

"My system," said Noyes, displaying now one and now another volume to me, "secures me against the blunder of addressing a particular editor twice with the same manuscript; secondly, it enables me to know where any manuscript after it has left my hands is at the moment, and so I can keep my rule—my inflexible rule—that until one week has elapsed nothing of mine on any subject is under the eye of more than one editor." The moral rectitude of this precaution he stressed.

His annotations in manuscript were themselves indexed, while he had a subject index, a topographical index, an index of familiar historical references, and many alphabetical lists to be employed in supplement of one or other of his

forms of classification. I was amazed at one moment by the pertinacity of these designs for informing the public upon what, for the most part, did not matter; at another moment I was shocked at his impudence in supposing that he could deal in any authoritative manner with such an immense range. I felt at a loss what to say, and my first comment was ill-received.

"Have you read an amusing story by Arnold Bennett?" I asked.

He caught me up sharply. "I never read novels," he said, "I study life. My system is my own. I think you will soon see how it all works. And he bowed slightly, as signifying that he saw in me an intelligence like his own, of a high level. I sat down, and he began. For half an hour he proceeded to explain, to bore, and yet, perversely, to fascinate.

"Take topography—say, Loamshire—at random," and he turned over the pages of one of the indexed volumes; "I have noted that this county contains the birthplaces of seven ancient worthies. In my statistical reference book there is an article in which I have compared the ratios of ancient worthies born in the various English counties to the estimated population of those counties at the date of the births. That was an interesting and most difficult piece of research. I have a manuscript on the subject now out. I could tell you exactly where it is and how long it has been there. In another letter I define what is meant by the phrase 'ancient worthies.'" Here he reached for a fresh reference book which I saw was labelled "Philosophical studies," consulted an entry, and shook his head. "That article has been to thirty-eight places," he said, "and is now with the editor of *Strive and Conquer*, a monthly magazine which is stated to circulate among educationists. There are difficulties, it must be admitted, connected with my philosophical studies; they are not printed with any regularity, and I have trouble in finding out where they appear. For example, *Strive and*

*Conquer* is not on sale at any book-stall, the clerk at our station tells me that he cannot find out who publishes it, and I have not kept the address of the paper. Too bad."

"Monstrous," I assented, though comment was quite unnecessary as an encouragement.

"Concerning the 'ancient worthies' of Loamshire," he ran on, "I have written centenary notes in the case of five. They have all been published, signed—I think with pardonable duplicity—'A Loamshire Man.' A sixth centenary falls due next week; the letter is written, and will be posted in due time. I have noted that in the seventh case the letter need not be written for three years, but there is no fear that under my system he will be forgotten."

"No fear at all," I agreed. "Who was he?"

"I am not sure of his name," he replied, "without looking at my notes. I recall that he was a numismatist, and I think he was a bigamist. I have his record." And he rose to consult a scrap-book.

I rose also, feeling that I had had enough, when he immediately resumed his seat and flowed on evenly. "In dealing with the worthies I amassed some valuable material in respect of the historic past of our English counties, and I have introduced Druidical vestiges and Roman remains to many who never gave a thought to them before. I usually employ the pseudonym 'A Son of the Soil' for these letters. I have been lucky with them, and also to some extent with various communications upon rural customs and country superstitions."

I said with resignation that his knowledge appeared to be encyclopædic, and that I must really be going.

"Of course I use encyclopædias," he replied, "but with discretion. I have to avoid entomology and ornithology. The people who practise these sciences are very contentious. I have been contradicted in rude terms by them, but there is so much to be done that I welcome any limitations. In regard to Clayshire now, I have as yet touched on nothing save the infamous train service of the county and already—

pardon me" (here he consulted a scrap-book)— "my letters number seventeen, all taking up different points. Fourteen have been printed and the others are on their travels. Of Chalkshire——"

This sort of thing I felt had to be stopped, and I pleaded with truth the approach of my dinner hour. The reverberation of a train enabled him to tell me the probable time without consulting a watch, but he admitted that he was not certain of being quite correct, inasmuch as the only train on the whole system, as far as he had been able to detect, which conformed persistently with the time-table, was that which arrived below his house at 11.3 P. M., having left London at 10.30 P. M.

" 'The saving grace,' I call it. I go to bed by that train. The night on which that train is late I will send an exposure of the management to the Press which will bring obloquy upon the directorate. I have full notes for the letter. I shall send it to the *Scrutator,* a paper which so far has declined to give me access to their public. But I try to be fair, and as long as the 11.3 is punctual I stay my hand."

In the passage, while her husband, with glowing face, was protesting that I must come again and encourage him, Mrs. Noyes bowed in silence.

Though when I left the house the man had bored me bitterly, yet in response to some of many invitations I would go occasionally to see the famous system in operation. In his explanations he seldom had anything to say worth saying, and in his printed letters seemed seldom to say anything in a manner that was not trite and pretentious. When he stumbled on a good point he never recognised it as novel or logical, but rather steered away from it, as though he feared to leave his charted course of banality. But his industry was wondrous and his absorption was insane. He fascinated me.

I made no headway with his wife. She concealed badly her irritation at my interest in her husband's passion, and she never produced the boy for my inspection; in fact, I felt

that she kept him from me. Once only did she go beyond formal greeting—then, in answer to my comments upon his industry, she jerked out an odd statement soon to be recalled to my memory: she said, "I put him on to it and I shall live to repent it."

. . . . . .

One morning he was awaiting me on the platform, prepared to greet me, and I knew that there must be some special performance to which he wished to call my attention. For, despite the sort of intimacy which had grown up between us, he always preserved in public an air of aloofness, born of strict intention to keep his place, as he would have phrased it; he would wait punctiliously for my nod, and limited our overt connexion to a formal return of my "Good morning." But on this occasion he came up to me at once, flourishing a newspaper.

"You've got your *Scrutator,*" he exclaimed. "At last there's a letter of mine in it. It's signed 'Arithmeticus.' And there's a leading article about it. They don't give me proper credit. They've got on the wrong track. They're too political." And as our train drew in he was still explaining that the worst of superior papers like the *Scrutator* was that "they got out of touch with human interest and became political."

On my way to London I read the words of "Arithmeticus" and the leading article which they had prompted, and the latter was indeed political. I felt that Noyes was in a direct route for trouble. He had been indiscreet, glaringly indiscreet, and I suspected that he had surprised someone's confidence. I knew nothing of his daily work beyond the fact that he had subservient duties in a Government office, and, while I sensed his wrong behaviour, I was amazed that he should have had any opportunity of learning what he had disclosed. Briefly Noyes was the man who by an anonymous letter, the letter which I read that morning in the *Scrutator,* started the famous Cassalonga scandal. Many will remember that the *Scrutator's* commentary upon that

letter, while shaking the existing Government to its foundation, placed upon an honourable if careless statesman that character for cynicism which is still cited against his party whenever it will serve a purpose upon political platforms. The incident is described in the closing chapter of Professor Lionel Highmore's "Backstairs Politics in the Edwardian Era," and even those who contemn that work, because the Professor moved among us for many years as Leon Heymer, will admit that none the less there is much in it that is entertaining, and some incendiary material for the combustion of fine reputations. The Professor's account of the episode is not accurate, but he did not have the opportunity for ascertaining the facts that was now to be thrust upon me.

Some three days after Noyes's debut in the pages of the *Scrutator* his wife paid me a visit. She was calm at first and spoke with such coherence that few interventions on my side were necessary. But it was easy to see that her demeanour resulted from a self-control that she could maintain only with effort; she was a frightened and exasperated woman. She began by saying that Noyes had been dismissed that morning from his office for breach of trust, with a month's salary and without a character. "And very spiteful they were about it," she considered. "They kept on calling his conduct 'gross' and that hurt him, and 'unpardonable' because they did not intend to listen to his explanation. They'll never take him back, and if they did it wouldn't cure him. He's mad."

I tried here some expostulation, but she turned on me with anger. "I've taken the liberty," she said, "of intruding upon you because my husband thinks so much of your opinion. He thinks that you admire him, and I can see that he amuses you. That's all."

The accuracy of the surmise closed my lips, and she went on, still with fair composure, though fighting to preserve it, "He's mad, and I'm to blame. At first I encouraged him to write letters. He used to consult me about them. And

the work kept him at home. You see he comes of a drinking family, and it made me feel safe having him with me in the evenings. He loved to talk, and I thought he was the sort that if he couldn't talk at home would talk abroad. And I feared that would mean drink. But at last I got tired of hearing him talk. I stood it for two years, and then I put the idea into his head that he should send his notions to the newspapers. And the very first things he sent they printed. That was bad luck, though we both thought it fine. But this letter writing grew upon him, and soon, as far as I was concerned, he might as well have been fuddling himself in a public-house. It would have been cheaper, for he took to buying dozens of daily papers and weekly papers, sometimes quite expensive ones. And then he said he must have books, and they often cost a lot. He couldn't have spent more on drink. And he might as well be speechless with drink from morning to night for all the conversation I ever have with him."

"Mrs. Noyes," said I, "you're taking a morbid view. You are really quite happy in your home life, and I am sure he is devoted to you and the boy."

"He's used to me, and that's all there is about it. And as for the way he treats Edward, it makes me want to kill him. Not that he isn't kind and all that," she added, noting perhaps surprise in my face. "Oh, he's what you might call indulgent. But he drags the poor kid into his letters and shows him up before the public in a way that's shameful. If the people about here, who read my husband's letters, knew I was the mother of the child that's had pages written to prove all sorts of nasty things about feeding and grandparents and instincts and diseases, I'd run away and take the child with me, or drown him and myself too. He uses the boy to write about, and uses his house as a place to write in, and doesn't care a scrap about a home or a family, except where they fit in to what he calls his work. It makes me sick to hear him call it his work, when it's only his craze. And now he's lost his real work, and his craze won't bring

money. It costs money. And we haven't got any savings, for they've all gone to buy a lot of books that he calls his tools. And how's he to get any engagement again? Sacked without a character. And serve him right. What's to become of us?" And here she broke into tears.

I tried to console her by reminding her, without originality, that things would turn up.

"They may and they mayn't," she responded, "but you'll have a chance of helping him. For he's coming to tell you the whole story."

And with that she left, bidding me good night with dignity, and having recovered her exterior calmness.

I did not receive any prompt visit from Noyes. I saw him on the platform now and again, but he did not present himself with punctuality to catch his former morning train. On the occasions when he put in an appearance he did not exhibit any differences that struck the eye, and his conversation with fellow-travellers was on the old lines.

I noted that the speaker's popularity was still preserved, while I guessed that prestige had been gained by his assumption of the part of a Government servant in retreat. He was hardened in his self-deception, and was taking himself still more seriously as an instructor and even as a philosopher. I could see him spending the whole of his idle day in devising ways for indulging his mania for publicity. I could picture his idiotic energy in indexing his varied disquisitions. But what of his wife and their home life now? Had he any work at all that brought in money? Was it true, as she said, that his habits had never allowed him to effect any savings on his salary?

. . . . . .

But a month or more elapsed before I could answer these questions for myself. Then the signs became clear that real trouble had set in. He no longer sought a crowded carriage; the serenity of face was gone, and the self-confidence was replaced by self-effacement; boots and hat betrayed their

vulnerability, and the irrepressible talker was now shy and morose.

I had resolved to break in upon his reserve with an invitation that he should tell me how he was faring, when he anticipated me. Entering my study one evening he plunged into the middle of things. His hurry and agitation were at variance with his former punctilio, and probably he was feeling that only with a rush could he surmount his reluctance to confession. His story came from him with incoherent rapidity, and it will be seen to differ in many places from Professor Lionel Highmore's account of the episode, and to dispose effectively of some of that person's disquieting innuendoes against highly placed Civil Servants.

It was as follows: One day no less a person than the Prime Minister sought information from the chief of Noyes's bureau respecting the figures of British trade with a minor Asiatic power. The figures covered a period of which the commercial activities had been summarised recently by Noyes, and accordingly he was told off to answer the questions propounded by the Premier's private secretary, a Mr. Valcourt. Apart from the flutter of excitement created by association, however slight and formal, with the head of the Government, Noyes felt no concern in the matter; the work had fallen to him by the chance of routine. Thinking, however, that certain of the figures would make popular reading, and with no other desire than to inform the public, he had disclosed them in a letter to the *Scrutator*. Whereupon, he said, he had been discharged at once, no explanation of his conduct having been even requested of him.

I listened to him with real amazement. He had no appreciation of what he had done—not only did he seem to be unaware that he had broken the fundamental rule of preserving the confidence of an employer, but he had taken no note of the extraordinary disturbance of public affairs that had followed upon his indiscretion. He classed all the ensuing turmoil as "political" and, therefore, as outside his interest. He was the first man whom I had met since the

storm burst over the Prime Minister's head who was unaware of what had happened.

The sequence of events was actually this. Our exports to certain countries, it chanced, had gone down, and the fact having been unfavourably noticed by the Opposition, the Prime Minister decided to accept the challenge. For this purpose he elected to use the figures in respect to the trade of Great Britain with the State of Cassalonga in order to prove that his critics for party reasons had been over prompt to find fault. For our trade with Cassalonga had improved in a marked way. The Prime Minister made a statement in the House of Commons, using the figures supplied by Noyes's bureau, but in general terms and without allocation of them to detailed headings. Noyes sent his letter to the *Scrutator,* by a genuine coincidence, on the same evening, and showed the Prime Minister to have been in ignorance that the compliment paid by Cassalonga to British trade was in the main the result of a huge contract undertaken by a London firm for refurnishing a winter palace and a summer palace, the residences of the King. The fact emerged from Noyes's communication that the expenses incurred by the State of Cassalonga on behalf of their potentate were connected in a large part with the right luxurious fittings of new quarters for the women of the Court, and the actual sums spent in this direction were revealed.

The Prime Minister, unfortunately in the event, scored a tactical success in a speech wherein he purported to deal with Cassalonga commerce; he made an effective declaration which disconcerted his opponents. They leapt at the perfect opening for retaliation, when "Arithmeticus" supplied the evidence to the *Scrutator,* and used their advantage mercilessly. The Prime Minister, a man of honour, was made to smart under the exposure of what was described as his duplicity, and the leading article in the *Scrutator*—source of Noyes's self-congratulation even while he regretted its absorption in politics—set an example which was widely followed in the Press. It can be guessed that the Prime

Minister, unable to make a public defence, in private handed on the abuse to his private secretary, and it may be guessed also that it was the Prime Minister's secretary who had secured Noyes's immediate dismissal.

"They wouldn't listen to a word I said," Noyes complained. "They sent me off the day after my letter appeared." He did not either defend his conduct or confess its irregularity; he was quite ignorant of the public effects of his action. He appeared to regard the episode as nothing more than a striking example of the tactlessness of editors in dragging politics into social matters.

"I never touch politics," he reiterated. "In all the hundreds of letters I have written you will not find a word of politics. I told the office so, but my chief said he wasn't talking about what I had written, but only about the fact that I had got the information through being a Government servant. The Prime Minister considered that he had been deceived, he told me; and when I said that my letter contained nothing that had not been told to Mr. Valcourt, who is the Prime Minister's private secretary, he said that my statement happened to be particularly damaging, for it was denied by the secretary. I was given one day to go through the work I was engaged upon with the head clerk in my room, who said he was sorry for me as I was a very good worker, but that he couldn't think how I had been such a fool."

I asked Noyes if he had made any attempt since his dismissal to get reinstatement, and I gathered that he had not done so; and indeed that he was not anxious to go back, but hoped to get literary employment.

I could surmise what was coming.

"I have been treated very meanly," he went on. "I have written column after column for papers of every sort, and I have never taken any money. It was my aim to give freely the information the people wanted, and I never asked for any return other than the satisfaction of my conscience. For years I have spared no trouble in the cause of public

instruction, and I think it is shameful that the editors who have used my brains so often to the advantage of their circulation should refuse to pay for further letters now that I am not in a position to slave for honour alone. I have material for educating all classes of readers which has cost me many midnight hours of toil. It is catalogued and arranged for immediate employment, and you will hardly believe it, but I cannot earn a shilling. I have written most valuable matter nightly and daily since my time has been my own. But when my communications have been printed and requests for payment have been made they have been ignored, and when I have made payment a condition of publication I have not been published. It is useless for me to pursue my labours." His misery was real, but it proceeded mainly not from losing his post, but from the closure put upon a passion which he could no longer afford to indulge.

Inquiry about his finances led to an explosive assertion that he had not come to beg, but I learned that his wife's forebodings as to the financial plight were justified. It seemed that the family would soon be enduring hunger unless he could get employment where time spent meant money earned. However he would not accept a loan, but left upon my promise that "I would see what I could do."

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As it happened there was an unusual sequel to a form of words which almost invariably leads to futile negotiations, and a few days later I was able to introduce Noyes to a new career. I went in the first place to his late bureau where I knew a man who was high up. He took me to Noyes's chief, when my inquiry if there was any chance of reinstatement for my friend received an uncompromising negative.

"I'm sorry about the poor devil, but I can't do anything," was the reply. "Noyes only got what he deserved. I would have tried to help him if it had been the least use, for he was a good chap in the office, industrious and methodical,

with a certain genius for getting at facts. But we should have Valcourt kicking up a row with us. He made a point of our sacking the man. I gather the Prime Minister gave Valcourt a sharp rowing, and he's very sore. Valcourt's the principal sufferer. Fellows in the House resented his letting the Prime Minister down by his smart concealments, and he's not going to be run by the party for the seat that was promised him. As soon as his name came forward there would be questions raised about the infernal letter, and the Government want it forgotten. It's a bad blow for them as it is; they'll lose seats at all the next by-elections. I can't do anything for Noyes."

But, as a matter of fact, the good fellow did a great deal. I agreed that the case could not be reopened with the Government, but I persuaded him to write to me giving credit to his late clerk for the qualities that he had mentioned, and allowing me to show the note in a few places where there might be a chance of Noyes getting a trial. And furnished with that note, I introduced Noyes to the distinguished persons whom I allude to as my publishers, but who do not advertise my connexion with them as a client, and who have not earned much by their connexion with me. However, they elected to be sympathetic, and in a large and expanding business they were able to find a post in which Noyes could be tried. If he could render good service, using his equipment as cataloguer and literary man in behalf of a popular encyclopædia which the firm was proposing to bring out, they thought that there might be a modest but promising opening for him. If an inspection proved satisfactory he could begin at once.

He came to thank me, radiant, and excusably puffed up by the interview with his new employers which had secured him the appointment. He had taken with him some of his scrap-books, and had explained his system to the editor of the projected publication.

"He saw at once," said Noyes, "that I had ideas, and that I could get straight to the people. The firm have given me

quite a free hand in many interesting directions, and I can show them that their confidence is well placed." It was human that he should add, seeing that I had warned him against the continuance of his letter-writing habit— "They may want me to write to the Press on encyclopædic subjects."

I found the scope imposing, and he held that his system would bear the necessary expansion. I bade him for heaven's sake to be careful and to remember that he had had a lesson, but, even while he nodded an assent, he wore the air of one who had not profited.

Mrs. Noyes also came to thank me. She was grateful but gloomy. "You've saved us," she said, "but it will be more letter-writing than ever. He's enlarging his system. The office has put in the telephone for us. He spends half the night worrying at his index books, and gives himself such airs as—well . . ." she broke off, adding, "I think he's mad."

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There now ensued a short period when I saw Noyes only occasionally, and I noted with pleasure, as accruing to my own credit, that he was wearing again his former air of contentment. Probably his hours were less rigorous than they had been; certainly they were less regular, for he made no longer an inevitable appearance to catch the wonted train. Whenever we met on the platform he would give me a reassuring nod, and he would now and again address me, saying that he found his work congenial. He continued to buy journals, but he took an early opportunity to explain to me that the firm reimbursed him, and that it was by their instructions that he approached editors with more assiduity than ever.

"My system has proved to be very useful to them," he explained. "My indexes cover so much ground. Of course their first care is the preparation of the new encyclopædia; they are calling it 'The Compleat Intelligencer.' I have written several letters suitable to the pages of different

popular organs in which I have referred to the new venture in fitting words, giving interesting examples of the use of the archaic word 'compleat' in literary productions. Some of the letters have been published and have given the firm much pleasure. Sometimes the advertisement departments of the papers have approached the firm to solicit support, but the firm is generally reluctant to buy publicity. Spontaneous sympathy is much more gratifying and more valuable."

"And cheaper," I interjected.

"There is that," he admitted, "but I much prefer that my communications should stand on their merits. I myself have never been paid for my public work, and should resent its being paid for in any form." Here he became very stiff and proud.

I remember to have thought that prosperity was not going to be wholly good for him, and Mrs. Noyes, by her manner, appeared to share this sentiment when we exchanged a few words in the street, but she contented herself with saying that he was writing more and more letters, and that "she didn't know." She shook her head, and conveyed that she had forebodings.

Her instinct proved correct, for within a week or two of my meeting with his wife Noyes had again encompassed his own ruin; and the sensation caused by the publication of the Cassalonga letter was rivalled by that which followed the giving away of the carefully guarded anonymity of the Caxton Correspondence. The Cassalonga revelations had been employed so immediately in Parliamentary dialectics that the public came quickly to regard the episode as a not unusual example of front-bench quarrelling, and it was dismissed by many, in the spirit of Noyes himself, as of purely political consequence. Election agents might know that the wretched affair would emerge into publicity at contested elections, and Parliamentarians would long remember the furious debates about the "Arithmeticus" letter, but general society soon ceased to remember the sensation.

The disclosure by the *Scrutator* of the authorship of the

Caxton Correspondence, a second sensation brought about by Noyes in that passion for publicity which it had now become his paid duty to indulge, appealed to more popular sentiment. The announcement that the tolerant, scurrilous and openly feminist social diary, which had set thousands speculating as to its authorship during its serial appearance in an illustrated weekly paper, was being written by the Professor of International Law at a famous university, and one whose every gesture, whether in deed, word or script, exemplified rigidity of morals and acceptance of established order, proved a real shock. For the Caxton Correspondence held up to amused contempt each principle, tenet, and sentiment for which the Professor stood, and stood in a prominent way. The cynical were amused and the serious were outraged; the dichotomous author was furious and so were the publishers of each half of his works. The Professor in his ethical propaganda, issued in expensive tomes by Noyes's firm, aimed at something of the proud status of a Jeremy Bentham, and had succeeded so far as to be acclaimed in academic circles as the most learned of our jurisprudents. He valued highly the fame obtained by his sympathetic attitude towards foreign peoples, and in his tractates he would arraign his countrymen at the bar of a lofty moral court for their class intolerance, indocility, levity, and racial pride. And he did all this very solemnly. So that the revelation that he was the creator of the Caxton Correspondence amounted to a public confession that his austerity was a sham. For in these articles international leagues were held up to contempt, and the British were begged to concentrate upon their grand heritage of freedom, and to find that that freedom was actually demonstrated when moral restraints were set aside. The articles were illogical and ill-natured, but the easy mastery of language, the wide range of reference, and the close familiarity with many provinces of life which they exhibited, made for their open-mouthed consumption, and their monthly appearance was awaited by many readers and received with extravagant praise or bitter

blame. Their authorship had been fiercely debated from the day when the first article appeared, and collections in volume form had proved best-sellers when handled by an enterprising Anglo-American House. Thus the *Scrutator,* assuming the correctness of its surmise, had smashed the reputation of a philosopher and also threatened two fountains of money with drought.

The revelation was but a few hours old when I learned to whom the public, through the medium of the *Scrutator,* owed its latest excitement. I had returned from work and was engaged actually in reading in an evening paper some unrestrained censure of the Professor as one who had shocked the literary world by his shameless duplicity, when Noyes was announced. He brought with him a letter which he had received from the firm as he was leaving the office that evening, and which ordered him to absent himself the following morning from his ordinary duties, and wait on the managing director to explain his unpardonable action in revealing to the editor of the *Scrutator* the secret of the authorship of the Caxton Correspondence. He was jaunty, and assured me that it was an entire mistake to suppose that he was implicated; the accusation was a preposterous one inasmuch as he had never himself known who wrote the Caxton Correspondence. He hoped that as I had been so kind in introducing him to the firm, I would speak for him, though he could hardly imagine that it would be necessary.

I felt that before the firm would make the charge there must have been something to go on, and I asked for more information. Noyes told me all that there was to tell.

It appeared that the proofs of the new volume of the Professor entitled "International Illegalities," which was at press, had been entrusted to Noyes in order that he might construct an index. While employed on this task, and following a course approved by his employers, he sent a letter to the *Scrutator* designed to create interest in the forthcoming work. He was in a strong position from which to prophesy what the book would contain, but experience told

him that much guile would be needed to persuade the newspaper to print his letter. He had approached his object warily, he told me, giving as his reason for writing to the newspaper the intent to point out how the desire to use foreign phrases often betrayed pretentious people into saying what they did not mean to say. He had in one of his scrapbooks a list of the traps into which affectation might lure the unwary or the unlettered, and he had used this, in an insidious manner, for arriving at his real intent in addressing the editor. When setting out certain familiar errors, he had alluded to the Professor's careful avoidance of them, as also to his strictness in employing no tongue but English unless impelled by a particular aptness of meaning or economy of words. And with a view further to conceal his objects he had bracketed with the Professor in his laudatory remarks the anonymous author of the Caxton Correspondence, whom he had noticed in the course of compiling his list to be similarly well-behaved in the use of foreign tongues. He gave me a copy of his letter— "One of the best I have ever written"—and it bore out his words.

This communication was not printed, and it seemed to be unlikely that the *Scrutator* would have made its assertion, with comments that would have been unjustifiable in case of error, upon such evidence. I felt convinced that Noyes was not lying, and yet it seemed that he must have supplied the *Scrutator* with more information than he was aware of. I did not feel so certain as he appeared to be that his employers would be satisfied with his declaration of innocence, or, indeed, that absence of design was going to prove sufficient apology for the damage caused.

I looked at Noyes's complacent face, and I could see that he had no idea that any serious situation had been created. He was amused rather than irritated that he should be suspected of having revealed what he had never known, and the object of his visit was to invite me to join him in pointing out to his firm that a ridiculous error had been made. I was to join in the joke.

"I think," said I, "that you had better go first to the office of the *Scrutator*, and clear up what has happened," but to this his rejoinder was merely to wonder if they would publish his letter to-morrow, for "there are things in it which would be of the greatest educational value to the people and which ought to be spread about. I could follow up that letter with most interesting communications, material for which is all filed under my system."

His face began to assume the mildly rapturous aspect which would accompany allusions to "the system," and I decided to let him go home without imparting to him my forebodings; he went in a state of high self-satisfaction, brought about by the contemplation of his rôle as a popular instructor. But I did not share his mood, and when I had re-read the copy of his letter which he had left with me, I saw one flaw in his defence, acquitted though he might be of purposeful breach of trust. He had quoted a passage from the Professor's volume now at the press, and the article in the *Scrutator* had extracted a certain phrase in support of its very positive surmise.

I prepared to interview the editor of the *Scrutator*. I had made myself responsible for Noyes, and I had a sense of approaching trouble, while I was curious to ascertain what had happened. I obtained access immediately when I stated that I had come in connexion with the Caxton Correspondence, for so provocative an article could hardly have been published without anticipation of discussion. I went straight to the point and asked who had supplied the material on which the article had been based, and the editor asked, with similar directness, what business it was of mine. I explained that a friend of my own was accused of having committed a gross breach of trust in giving information concerning the Caxton Correspondence to the *Scrutator*, that I was convinced of his innocence, and that I hoped to obtain a formal assurance to that effect, even if I could not be trusted with the name of the real delin-

quent. I said that my friend was in immediate risk of being discharged without a character.

"Too bad," the editor answered, "but if that's the just penalty I ought to discharge myself and walk out of this chair. For I am what you call the delinquent—that is to say, one of my staff, for whom I am answerable, gave me the information. But the secret lay on the surface for any intelligent critic's use." He turned in his chair and summoned a Mr. Jenkins through an open door behind him.

"Jenkins," he explained, as an untidy young man entered behind the largest size in spectacles, "is the author of our crossword puzzle. Do you ever try it? No? I see that I have your sympathy in the last degradation of journalism. Jenkins was hired to assist the foreign editor, and he has persuaded me to let him publish one—just one—crossword puzzle every week. We give prizes for its solution, but such subtlety does Jenkins display that it is never solved. He spends hours in constructing it which he is paid to occupy otherwise; he appeals for help to everyone and wastes the office time; and he believes that our circulation is largely due to his riddles. Jenkins brought me the evidence I wanted before I wrote the article; he's a bright lad, and if you will go with him he will tell you all about it."

Whereupon the editor shook hands with me, and Mr. Jenkins led me into the adjoining room, and asked me what I wanted to know. I said that I wanted to know one thing—how did the information reach him which suggested that the famous Professor of International Law was also the author of the Caxton Correspondence. And I said that I hoped to be allowed to use anything which he could tell me in a place where it would be useful to a friend.

"The information, not which suggested but which proved the case, was obtained from the Professor under his own hand," said Mr. Jenkins.

"He told you?" I exclaimed.

"Oh, in a way. In the same way as he has told and

is telling everybody. Look at this—and this—and this," he went on, indicating various pages in a row of books open upon the table. "Phrase after phrase the same, same tricks, same examples, sometimes the same quotations, and absolutely identical uses of foreign languages. A letter came here alluding to this last fact. It put me on the track. I collected these books and spent a couple of hours in digging out the parallels. There's no doubt about it at all."

"I am afraid that I can guess the author of that letter."

"Can you? Well I was to tell you all about it, so you may have his name. It was a pestilential fellow called Noyes."

"That's my friend."

"Sorry," said Jenkins. "I dare say he's a good enough chap in private—good parent and good citizen and all that. But as far as we are concerned pestilential is the word for him. Got a mania for writing under sickening pseudonyms to any paper that's handy, about any subject that doesn't matter, in any way that isn't interesting. We don't publish his rot, of course (alas for the fame of the author of the Cassalonga letter!). But it was a letter from him that gave me the tip."

"I've seen it," I said. "But there was nothing in it to support the deduction that has been made."

I explained that Noyes knew nothing of the mystery, and was absorbed in the classification of his scrap-books.

"Mystery? There was no mystery. The whole thing simply stuck out. Of course Noyes didn't know it. He belongs to the class that never knows anything until it has been demonstrated. He knows it now. The letter was brought to me because it set out a lot of foreign quotations correctly copied from some phrase book, with the form of error frequent among writers. The sort of thing is often handed on to me for possible use in our crossword puzzle —of which we are all very proud, whatever the editor may have been telling you. The quotations were from the

Caxton Correspondence and also from the writings of the Professor, the idea being to boom the old man's book. But I had an idea also, for I am, as you have just heard, a bright lad. I ran through a volume of the Caxton Correspondence and half a dozen chapters in some awful book called 'Ethical Perversities,' and then I knew. However, I spent some time digging out the parallels—I say, that Professor is a spiteful devil—and the similarities in argument and illustration are convincing. We can stand pat on our discovery. A pretty piece of work, but the facts ought to let your friend out. It would be a shame if he got into a row about it. I rather wish I hadn't been so damned bright."

I listened, but I did not feel as sanguine as Mr. Jenkins. Logically Noyes could not be blamed for revealing what he had not known. It was thoroughly unlucky that one of the quotations illustrating the Professor's rigid literary accuracy had been taken from the author's proofs to which no one, save Noyes and the Professor, had had access, but the allusion had been made innocently and in accordance with the publishers' instructions to interest readers in the volume now at press. As the Professor was bursting with logicality he might be persuaded to take a lenient view; but I did not expect him to do so, for his reputation consorted with Mr. Jenkins's estimate of him. Grave mischief had been done and Noyes had been the medium. I did not hope much from the Professor's kind heart, while the publishers knew that Noyes had been discharged from Government service for a similar indiscretion.

I wrote to the publishers saying that Noyes had informed me of their demand for an explanation of the article which had appeared in the *Scrutator*, and that, as I had introduced Noyes to them, I thought it my duty to interview the editor of the *Scrutator* and verify my friend's protest of innocence. I said that Noyes could not possibly have foreseen that a letter, which he had written on their instructions, conveyed the fatal truth.

I had better not have interfered.

That evening Noyes burst in on me.

"Sent away," he moaned, sinking into a chair, the arm of which he clutched closely, as he strove to contract the muscles of a wretched face and to control the sobs that were rising in a convulsed gorge. When he could command his voice, he went on, the exclamations rushing out beween the choking intakes of breath. "Sent away like a dog. No notice. Turned out into the street. No character. Called a traitor. Abused. I did nothing but what I was told. I gave away no trust. How could I? I didn't know anything. Can't look my wife in the face. Can't ever see her again. She's cruel. She says I'm mad. It must end." And he collapsed into shuddering whimpers.

There was no doubt about the man's utter misery. I took the accepted course and thrust drink upon him, while murmuring silly exhortations about "bucking up." Suddenly he got on to his feet, grasped the tumbler, threw it on the floor, and stamped on the fragments. Then he sat down, frightened at his own violence, and took from his pocket the article in the *Scrutator*.

"I never wrote a word of it," he whispered. "I sent the *Scrutator* the letter which I left with you. It would have interested the public, and I brought in the Professor's new work because that was my instruction. I told them so. They wouldn't listen. They said it was quite plain that I had betrayed their trust. They made inquiries at the *Scrutator*, but the editor refused to say anything to them. They said that your letter to them showed that I was to blame. The Professor was there, and I said that I had only called attention to a quotation in his new book which resembled something in the Caxton articles, in order to get people to talk about his book. He said I was a fool and that the publication of the book must be stopped. And the publishers said that that would cost them £2000. And the Professor said he didn't believe that. And then they all said I must go. What have I done that I should

be treated so? It's the end." And his low voice died down.

I said something or other about his going home, and meeting me the next day when his head was more clear, but he immediately burst again into violence.

"Home!" he shouted; "I've got no home. I tried to tell my wife about it all, but she says she will leave me. There's no money for her to go away with, but she's going all the same. She says that if I don't burn my notes and indexes she will. I expect she's trying to get at them now. It's the end."

And suddenly he rose and went out.

. . . . . .

At any rate, I thought, that is the end of Noyes as far as I am concerned. I could not help him any more, nor would he ask me, for he considered that I had given his employers justification for dismissing him.

So I determined to put him out of my mind, and I succeeded as well as one ever succeeds in following that decision. His misery and his appearance haunted me, and especially his closing words were uttered with such intentness that I began to think they might be serious. True, such words were a common formula with disappointed people, while it was impossible to think of Noyes in terms of melodrama; and yet they gave me a deeper certainty of his desperation than his degrading collapse had supplied. Much manipulation of what he thought was the English language, much use of synonyms and similes of the sort which insert themselves into writing where no guard is maintained over the pen, and a deep belief in the value of certain resonant adjectives—these things had moulded Noyes's everyday speech into the pattern of his Press communications. His ordinary conversation was framed on "the system," and from his mouth simplicity seemed an indecent revelation. As I recalled his abrupt outpourings, I saw that I had been looking upon a naked soul, and I was unable to mock myself out of this feeling. I remem-

ber to have got up from my desk and to have said out loud "Pooh," exactly as I should have been expected to do on the stage. I sat down and resumed the work I was engaged upon, and I remember to have found Noyes's face on the paper in front of me, and to have laughed at the idea of associating the smooth smugness of his features with tragedy. And then I remember to have risen suddenly and rushed to his house with terror rising in me.

The front door of the house was open, and in the passage his wife stood, holding her little boy's hand and looking out into the gathering darkness.

"He's gone," she said. "He's just gone into the road running. I called after him, but he didn't look back."

To my urgent questions as to the direction in which he had run her words found no reply.

"He came in a few minutes ago. He unlocked his study —he always keeps it locked now. He said, 'You can burn what you like,' and then he ran out into the road. Oh, I'm frightened. He's mad."

"Which way did he go?" I repeated, when the rumbling of a train in the adjacent cutting gave me a possible clue. I strove to remember where I should obtain the quickest access to the gorge below the house. I could recall one bridge over the lines, but it would take me some minutes to reach it, and probably, I thought, precautions were taken to prevent easy trespass at so inviting a spot. I ran into the garden and followed a little path that flanked one side of the house. Down this I blundered, feeling that the fear-racked woman behind me must know the reason for my act, scrambled awkwardly over the enclosing palisade, and bumped heavily down a decline on to the metals. All the time I was saying to myself "These things do not happen," and all the time I knew that somewhere a man was running hard by to his death.

As I looked up and down the gloomy defile in which I

found myself, lit up here and there by glimmerings from back windows, I strove to recall any reason for turning to the one hand or the other. Then a clock began to strike. I accepted its portent. Eleven o'clock it would mark, and assuredly Noyes was seeking his end beneath the wheels of that train whose habit of passing behind his house precisely at 11.3 he had extolled so often. If he had gone to meet the train I was too late. I peered through the gloom along the track on either side and saw no one. I turned in the direction which the train would follow, and there a curve in the track made the vista shorter. If he was just round the bend a chance was offered of coming upon him promptly.

The agony seemed protracted, but while I ran and as the din behind me began to beat on my ears, I found Noyes. Rather, I could discern, barely fifty yards away from me, a figure standing at the mouth of a tunnel, and as I did so the on-rushing train obliterated the vision. Two minutes later we met. He had his watch in his hand.

"That train was due to pass my house at 11.3," he said. "It will be four minutes late at the junction. That has never happened since I have kept my accurate watch on the traffic. I must go back and post my letter at once. It is already written."

"I wouldn't be too hard on the railway management," I suggested.

He did not answer, but turned aside suddenly and was violently sick. He then proceeded to ascend, by the side of the tunnel, a little footpath which debouched between two houses quite adjacent to his home.

"I go this way when I'm checking the trains," he said, and said no more until he reached his garden gate. And then "Good night. I must be going in or my wife will wonder what has become of me. I always go by that path when I'm checking trains," he repeated, and he went up the path to meet his wife, who was still standing at the

open door. She was alone. Her face was deformed with its tortured muscles, and her eyes were swollen. But her voice was calm as she said "Hurry up. You're wanted on the telephone."

. . . . . .

Any action consciously accomplished which cannot be inhibited by an effort of the will may be classed by experts as an obsession, and such parasitic fixtures on the attention of the victim lead often to mental decay. Mrs. Noyes may have been right literally in believing that her husband was mad, but my latest information reports him as cured. His cure began with the summons to the telephone.

That I learned later came from Mr. Jenkins of the *Scrutator*, who, remembering my description of Noyes's scrap-books, had thought suddenly that he could find an opening for so industrious a compiler. The result of his inspiration, fortunate for both Noyes and himself, was a scheme for the syndication of crossword puzzles, acrostics, anagrams, and similar verbal exercises, to be used by groups of newspapers and magazines which were not yet alive to the influence of such attractions upon their circulation. The project proved an immense success.

I saw Noyes once again, and he came to tell me that he was leaving our suburb. His wife, it seemed, had taken a dislike to their house, finding it too close to the railway. He added that he was employed in a congenial manner, and one which bade fair to be very remunerative. He entered into no details and left almost abruptly, and I knew that he intended never to see me again.

It was from Mr. Jenkins that I learned how profitable the alliance between himself and Noyes was proving, and how exactly Noyes's system had fitted into his plans.

"The fellow," he explained, "has filed and indexed all the footling things out of which our conundrums can be constructed. Our connexion expands almost weekly. Noyes does all the work and I take half the profits, which

amount to more than I get from the *Scrutator*. All the work is done at Noyes's house, and my editor is very pleased with me for losing my interest in crossword puzzles. So I may get a rise at the office."

# "PRONGS" [1]

*By* L. A. G. STRONG

From *John O' London's Weekly*

"Ay, Johnny! C'm' home. D'ye hear me tellin' ye? C'm' home out o' that."

But Johnny paid no attention. Crouching over the rock pool, he continued to gaze intently into the water, his small round face red from stooping and excitement.

His coat was many sizes too big for him. The sleeves had been cut off half-way down, and were so wide that when, as now, he had rolled one up, his thin arm was bare to the shoulder. His ragged little trousers showed the bare skin underneath in several places. On the rock ledge beside him four or five prawns moved convulsively; and, reaching out as far as he could, with his whole arm under water he was patiently stalking another. Slowly his red cold hand would creep towards its prey: he would be just upon it: then, with a sudden flirt of its tail, the prawn would shoot off backwards into another place, necessitating a change of position and a fresh pursuit. It was a cunning and elusive prawn: but the pool was not large. Even an eight-year-old could reach most parts of it, and when the prawn took refuge anywhere that was inaccessible, it could be dislodged with a piece of stick. Johnny had been chasing it for quite twenty minutes now, and was determinded to have it in the end.

So he paid no heed to the impatient voice of his elder brother, Dan, a boy some twelve years old, sulkily handsome, despite his rags and the dirt on his face, who sat on the sea wall a few yards off, swinging his bare legs.

[1] Copyright, 1929, by L. A. G. Strong.

For a little while there was silence, broken only by the rapt snuffles of Johnny; then Dan spoke again, more sharply:——

"Johnny! Don't ye hear what I'm sayin' to ye! It's time we were gone. C'm' on home, or ye'll be gettin' me belted!"

It was no joke, sometimes, being sent in charge of Johnny, he reflected, sourly, eyeing his small brother's behind and the soles of his feet, all of him that could be seen at the moment. Johnny was good company, and affectionate; but he resented being put in Dan's charge, and would often refuse to take orders from him. This meant an undignified squabble. Johnny, who was very strong for his age, would lie on the ground and howl, attracting the attention and sympathy of passers-by. If they were late in reaching home, it was he, Dan, who got the blame; and, despite much experience, Johnny never seemed to realize this. He would be sorry enough afterwards, for he was a warm-hearted little soul, but he never could grasp beforehand that his obstinacy would get his brother into trouble. Bad trouble it was, too, if their father happened to be at home. When Jem Foster had had a drop too much, or was bad-tempered for the want of drink, he became more than ever convinced of the need of discipline in his home. As he was usually in one condition or the other, and his sole disciplinary measure was the belt, his family were at pains to give him little occasion to use it. There was this much in his favour, that, unlike most of his kind, he rarely laid his hand upon them unless they gave him a pretext for doing so. But when there was trouble, Dan, as the elder, had to bear the brunt of it. He hated his father, and, once his own fierce temper was roused, he could not conceal his hatred; wherefore, his sufferings were worse than they might have been.

And here they were, the two of them, late for dinner already, and Johnny making no move to come, groping

there in the pool after his blasted prawns. Prawns! He wouldn't be belted for prawns, anyway.

"Johnny! D'ye hear me? C'm' on out o' that. We'll be late."

The little face, scarlet with excitement, looked suddenly round at him sideways. "Ah, Dan, can't ye wait, only just a minyit! There's but one of them left, only the one."

"C'm' on, I tell ye. Ye'll be gettin' me belted again."

"Only the one."

And he bent again over the pool. Furious, Dan jumped down from the wall and ran over to him.

"C'm' on out o' that. I'll wait no more. Ye'll be gettin' me belted, I'm tellin' ye."

He shook Johnny by the back of his trousers, nearly upsetting him into the pool.

"C'm' on home, will ye, when I bid ye?"

Johnny uttered a wail of disappointment.

"You're after frightenin' him on me. I just had him. Ah, me lovely big prong—a grand big lad!"

"You and your 'prongs'!" mimicked Dan, scornfully. Johnny always called them "prongs." "C'm' on home, do ye hear?"

"Ah, Danny, sure, can't ye wait just one minyit—one little minyit? Sure it's early yet. Sure——"

"C'm' on."

Out of patience, Dan jerked the small boy to his feet, and began to drag him off towards the wall.

"Me prongs! Me prongs!"

Struggling desperately, Johnny broke free, leaving a piece of tattered trouser in his brother's hand, and stooped to collect his captures. Galvanized into sudden activity, they leaped hither and thither on their sides, as the small red hands groped and grabbed for them. Gathering them up, Johnny pressed the mass against his breast, and suffered himself to be led over the uneven rocks to the wall. When they reached it, Dan jumped up first, and caught

at his arm to help him up. There was a scream of protest, but too late; Johnny's arm was pulled away from his chest, and some of the prawns fell upon the rocks below.

"Ah, Danny, looka, you're after makin' me drop them!" He put down the survivors on the wall, at a safe distance from the edge, and prepared to retrieve the others. But Danny, his patience at an end, held him fast, and began dragging him in the direction of home.

"Me prawns! I must get me prongs!"

Wailing, the small boy pulled and struggled. He was strong; he writhed and ducked and twisted, till Dan, in exasperation, caught him by the hair and by one of his wrists, and haled him for several yards by main force. But it was of no use. Johnny flung himself on the ground. Dan grabbed at him, and smacked his head hard: whereupon Johnny caught hold of his hand, and bit it with all his might.

A few yards off three men were talking, lounging by the wall, and spitting at frequent intervals upon it: local nondescripts, usually out of a job, and well content to remain so. Although the fight was going on close beside them, they took no notice of it, and did not even look round as Dan, white with rage, kneeled on the recumbent Johnny and set about him in good earnest. Heedless of all else, the brothers fought and cursed, till an extra hard whack made Johnny give up the battle and cover his face with his hands, screaming.

Dan stood up, and looked down at him.

"Now meybe ye'll come on home when I bid ye!" he said, breathlessly.

But Johnny would not rise. He lay and kicked and screamed. Dan caught hold of him in some consternation, and tried to heave him upon his feet. The only response was an even shriller scream.

Then one of the men looked round. He said nothing, but, taking his pipe from his mouth, he walked quietly

over, and with the full swing of his foot kicked Dan off the edge of the wall on to the rocks below. Without even looking to see the result, he replaced his pipe, walked back to his companions, and went on talking to them as if nothing had happened.

But he was soon interrupted again: this time by a furious assault from behind, by little fists beating at his thighs, and a shrill voice calling filthy curses. He looked round to find Johnny in an ecstasy of rage, squaring up to him, dancing up and down before him like a fury.

"C'm' on, c'm' on, ye big bully, ye!" screamed the little boy. "I'll larn ye, ye big bully, ye!"

The man's jaw dropped in surprise and amusement. All three stared at the raving child, slow grins forming on their faces.

"Oho," said the man, slowly. "Me young cocksparra. That's what ye'd be at, is it?"

Then Dan, weeping, appeared over the edge of the wall. By good fortune he was not badly hurt. Kick and fall had bruised and winded him: his forehead was scraped, and the blood was trickling from a cut on his shin: but his spirit was unbroken, and as his breath came back he cursed the man through his sobs with an expert profanity.

So they stood, a strange group: three laughing men, two weeping, furious boys: but the men were somehow ill at ease, and Dan's assailant felt a need to justify his action. He leaned upon morality.

"That'll larn ye to illtrate them that's smaller than yerself!" he pronounced, solemnly. "Be off with ye now, or I'll sarve ye worse." And he made a threatening gesture with his hand.

Dan confronted him. "Ye will, will ye?" he cried. "Wait till I tell me da what ye done. Wait, ye big—brute, ye! Wait till ye get a puck of Jem Foster's fist in yer gob, and then we'll see what ye'll do!"

Jem Foster, bedad! The men looked at one another uneasily, and the face of Dan's assailant lengthened. He

hadn't bargained for that. Jem Foster! This might turn out a nasty business. A bad man to quarrel with, Jem Foster. True, he wasn't famous for any great love of his children; but a bad man to cross. It would be well to run no risks with his like.

So he changed his tone, and the boys, at once perceiving it, began to dance up and down before him and to chant their father's name as though it were a kind of incantation.

"Are ye hurted?" asked the man with affected unconcern, coming forward to investigate; but Dan backed away, and spat at him. "Ah, well," he went on, "maybe I hurted ye more than I meaned. I didn't mean for ye to fall on the rocks—though, mind ye, ye richly desarved it. Didn't he, boys?"

"Richly desarved it!" echoed the other two. "Oh, bedad, he did, and more. Very light, he got off."

"Still, seein' I've hurted ye more nor I meaned, I'll try what I can do to make it up to ye."

Magnanimously the man put his hand in his pocket. "We'll make it up to him, won't we, boys?"

"Aye, sure, we will."

Between them they collected a sixpence and a handful of coppers. Dan and Johnny ceased their noise at once, and watched attentively.

"Now," said the man, holding out the coins, "do you take these, and say nothin' to yer da. What do ye say?"

Johnny's eyes were round. He looked at the money, and then at his brother. Dan wavered; all his resentment seemed suddenly to have left him, and he answered almost sadly:——

"I can't take yeer money," he said. "Me da would never suffer me to take a gift of money."

The man cajoled him. "Ah, come on, now, alanna. Take it, and yeer da'll be none the wiser."

Dan shook his head.

"I can't take a gift," he repeated. "I've nothin' to give ye in exchange."

Suddenly, as if he had been stung, Johnny went down on all fours, and in a moment was on the rocks under the wall ferreting about feverishly. The man stopped to stare at him.

"What the blazes ails ye?" he began. "Are ye——"

"The prongs," cried Johnny. "The prongs, Dan darlin'—me lovely prongs. Look at here: I have the best of them still. Here, take them, and give them to the gentleman—and ye can take the money, then. Isn't that so, Mister?" His small face wrinkled up at the man in eager inquiry. "Isn't that so?"

"It is, indeed," replied the man. "What is it ye have? Praans, is it? Indeed, and I'll buy them off o' ye, and glad to do it. I do have a great likin' for praans."

"Here they are." Johnny poured the limp green creatures into the big brown hand, opened dubiously to receive them.

"There's one trodden on, but ye can still ate him."

"Faith, and I can so." The man looked into his palm with pretended enthusiasm. "And here's yeer money." He tipped the coins into Dan's still shaking hand.

"And ye'll say nothin' to yeer da?"

"Nothin'."

The man saw that he could be trusted: and so it came about that, a minute later, the three were congratulating themselves on having got out from a nasty position, and the two boys were hurrying homeward, Johnny trotting at his brother's side, from time to time looking anxiously up at his face.

They were terribly late for the meal. Jem was in. He scowled at them as they entered, and began fumbling at his belt. Their mother's face showed pale in the gloom behind him.

But Johnny gave him no time.

"I'm terrible sorry we're late, da," he babbled, hurriedly. "We was catchin' prongs—and—a gintleman said he'd buy

them off of us—and we stayed on and catched a lot—and Dan has the money here. Look, da!"

Jem eyed them, and the money, in two minds. Ordinarily there would have been an outburst; but he was very dry, and the money was there, right enough; so he grabbed it, and with a growl motioned the boys away. The woman's face showed piteous relief, and the two, glad enough to escape, hastily followed her out to the yard, where she had a meal of potatoes and buttermilk waiting for them.

After they had eaten, they climbed a little way up the hill, past the tethered goat, to a grassy place between grey rocks, from which they had a wide view of the harbour and the sea: climbing slowly, for Dan's hurts were stiffening, and he hobbled painfully on the slope. They sat down together, facing the sea, in silence. It was a dead calm, and very clear. The horizon was a dark line drawn between sea and sky, and a ship which had sunk below it left a dark blue smudge of smoke, faint, motionless, incredibly distant.

Presently Johnny moved closer to his brother.

"I'm sorry, Danny," he whispered. "Is your hurts painin' ye? I'm sorry."

Dan did not seem to have heard; he still looked out to sea; but after a few moments his arm moved around Johnny's neck, and he began absentmindedly to stroke his hair. With a sigh of happiness, the little boy snuggled closer against his brother, and shut his eyes.

# THE ESCAPE [1]

## *By* E. H. LACON WATSON

From *The London Mercury*

He was conscious of making no very grand appearance as he left the fine old Georgian house and heard the front door close behind him with a well-oiled click. Quite smooth—like everything else in that infernal street—that street of lies and fair words. Nothing could have been blander than the tones of the eminent physician who had just pronounced his doom. At least, it had sounded to him like that, though clearly Sir James was minimising it as much as he could. "A simple operation," he had called it, lightly. But he knew well enough that men often died of it. There was Jerningham, one of his fellow-members at the club, who had died in a nursing-home the other day. The same thing, precisely. And Jerningham was a lot healthier than he had been, lately. Though he never said much about it, his heart used to palpitate cruelly sometimes, at night.

He knew, as he left the house, that he had not taken it well. The deferential butler, even, had noticed something, and seemed really concerned. Would he care to have a small whisky? He looked rather white. And in fact he had been glad to hold for a moment to the balusters as he came down the broad staircase. A sort of giddiness came over him. But he refused a drink.

He ought to have been able to take it better than that. But he had always been—rather that way—ever since he could remember. One of those nervous, highly-strung fellows whose lives have been a burden to them from the start.

[1] Copyright, 1929, by E. H. Lacon Watson.

He remembered perfectly well going to school for the first time: the desolate sensation of utter loneliness when he was left in the old college buildings, and his father had gone off to catch the train home. He felt exactly like a small fish dropped into a pool where there were a lot of hungry pike. It seemed to him that all his life had been spent scurrying into corners and trying to hide himself. All through his life he had been struggling to escape notice, unsuccessfully. Always he was being dragged out, held up, and exposed. He had never enjoyed his school-days. And even at the University it was not much better. He had been shy and nervous: he did not know how to deal with that loud-voiced, free-and-easy gang who used to swarm up into his rooms sometimes and "rag." Not the smallest use trying to adopt the same manner himself. He was detected at once as an impostor.

What a poor life he had passed! Probably his own fault, very largely. It did not pay to adopt that attitude towards the world that had always been his—the attitude of the Shrinker. If he had to go through it again now he would go on the other tack—if he could: he would be one of the bullies: he would impose his own will on the others. Easy enough, if you started right: the difficulty lay in just those first few steps. Or did it lie deeper down than that? Perhaps it did. He was just a Funk, by nature and habit. Never could he shake off that fatal disability now. It was too late.

True, he had been exceptionally unfortunate. Everywhere he went there was always one man who—well! who got on his nerves so that he hardly knew what to do with himself in his presence. Why were there such Beasts in the world? That had been the root of his trouble, really—the remarkable prevalence of Beasts. There had always been one, if not more, in his immediate neighborhood at school, and again at college, and again when he was in business, and now at his club. Always some one man whose business it seemed to be to annoy and afflict him. And just now, too,

when he had come into his little bit of money, and been able to retire, and fancied that, at last, he might be going to get some enjoyment out of life.

Marrable was the man's name. (Even about the name there was something revolting: it sounded fat, and luscious and over-ripe.) Pure imagination, no doubt, but from the first moment he had seen the man he had felt sure— No! he must manage somehow to get out of this habit of over-emphatic statement. Keep calm, judicial, under any provocation. In fact, he had not disliked the man so much just at first: he could vaguely recollect having thought him amusing. Amusing! Good God! Marrable used to sit there, in the card-room, just behind one of the players, and make comments. Of course no man ought to be allowed to do things of that sort: no man would in any really respectable club. That was the worst of the Camisis: it had fallen from its old position. Time was when it counted for something to be a member of the Camisis: now it seemed that anyone might join and—what was worse—behave much as they chose when they got there.

Of course, in a way, it was largely his own fault. He ought to have spoken to the other men—even complained to the committee if necessary. If he had acted firmly Marrable might have been abolished by now—perhaps.

But he was so infernally popular. (Why on earth a man like Marrable should be tolerated, let alone popular, entirely beat him, as it must beat everyone who considered for a moment.) He was big, and fat, and easy-going, and had one of those rather comic high-pitched voices that you occasionally find with fat men. Somehow, when he said things in that squeaky voice it was difficult to help laughing —at first. He had laughed himself, Heaven help him! before Marrable had begun to turn his attention to his own weaknesses. That was where the fellow was so infernally deceitful. He began by being as polite as could be, to a stranger; but in a day or two little familiarities would begin to creep in: at the end of a week he was probably calling

you by some absurd nickname, and making all the others laugh at the way you did certain things.

It was too much! At the mere thought of it Pontifex flushed all over: he could feel himself getting hot right down the back. Did I tell you his name was Pontifex? That was yet another of the many troubles that had oppressed him all his life, since he was a school-boy. He had begun to hope that this trouble, at any rate, would have passed when he attained to middle age. But that man Marrable had seized hold of it at once. He called him "Ponty" or sometimes "Pontifex Maximus," and pretended to receive anything he said on the subject of Bridge with exaggerated respect. A man's name ought to be sacred from that sort of silly jesting, in any respectable club. He had spoken about it to more than one of the members. But they had only just laughed and turned it off with some careless remark.

"Marrable? Oh, nobody minds what old Marrable says. He is a licensed jester. Why, only the other day——"

And they would go off into some story of what he had said or done to someone else. All very fine, but it did not really help Pontifex in his own trouble.

It had been getting to such a pitch lately that Pontifex wondered if he would not have to resign. But he knew in his heart that he would never have the courage to resign from the Camisis now. He had belonged to it ever since he first came to London, more than thirty years ago. He was a creature of habit. He knew that he could not manage to exist now without dropping in there at tea-time, and having a rubber or two afterwards, with a night out on Thursdays, when he stayed to dine and played on till about eleven. Fortunately Marrable never dined there, so that one night in the week at any rate was tolerably free from insult.

It was Thursday afternoon. The last Thursday before his operation—perhaps the last Thursday he would ever spend there. The next day he had to go to the nursing-home, and it must be confessed he did not like the thought

of going there in the least. He tried not to think of it more than he could help, but it kept recurring. They would keep him there a day or two, "getting him ready" for the knife, as though he were some sort of sacrifice; and then one morning they would wheel him into the operating-room and stick stupefying things into his mouth or over his nose, and do what they liked with him when he was all unconscious. And then—he might wake up again or he might not. And if he did, there was always the terrifying thought that he might awake to horrible agony—and death. If he was going to die he would rather die without coming round at all. But he did not want to die. He had always hated death.

Still, it was Thursday, and by the luck of things he had got just the sort of rubber he liked. A pleasant four, if they could keep it from being broken up by intruders. Perhaps the last evening's bridge he would have for a long while: possibly the last he would ever have. It sent a cold shiver through him when he thought of that.

He could not help saying something, after winning the first rubber, about that being his last night for some little time. They were all most sympathetic, and he was tempted to go into details a little (minimising it all, of course, in a half-humorous way) when he was aware suddenly of that hated voice just behind him. It gave him quite a start, for he had never heard Marrable come in.

"What! Old Ponty going to have an operation? Hope it'll improve his bridge, eh? Say, that's not a bad idea. Never heard of a man having an operation to improve his bridge before, did you?"

And he cackled in his silly, high-pitched voice, while the others laughed. That was one of the things that irritated Pontifex so much—the immunity of the beast from the common laws of civilised life. The other men never seemed to think he was saying anything ungentlemanly, or likely to be resented. Even Sellar, who was his partner, gave a sort of chuckle, and said something about the only operation that was likely to improve some players he knew. These fellows

did not seem to realise that bridge was a game demanding intense concentration of all the faculties—if you pretended to play at all. But how the devil could a man play with that fat fellow blowing down the back of his neck, and the sound of his voice still filling the whole room?

"Sorry, partner," he said, "Of course I had it sitting. Such a row going on I simply couldn't think."

"Ponty, old man, that's a rotten excuse, and you know it." Marrable spoke in a sort of high-pitched chuckle, as though he were immensely amused. For one moment Pontifex was aware of a sudden blurring of the sight, as though a film had come over his eyes. He saw the room through a russet cloud. His fingers twitched. Suppose now—just suppose he sprang at the man suddenly, from behind, when no one was there, and got his hands once firmly on that bulging neck, and held on! It seemed to him he could feel the vast bulk of the man struggling underneath him—at first—and then gradually growing still. Oh yes! he could be trusted to hold on if he once got him.

The cloud before his eyes faded slowly. He came to himself. That must be what they meant when they spoke of "seeing red," he thought. Well, there was a reddish tinge about that mist—a real sensation of colour. And it was exactly as though something had gone in his head. He could almost hear the snap. With it vanished, in a moment, all the old inhibitions, the defensive walls of civilisation that had been growing up round him since the days of his childhood. He seemed to see right down into his real self—an entirely different self from any he had known before.

With a tremendous effort he pulled himself back to the pretence of ordinary social life. That voice was still cackling about something. Drinks! Would he have a drink? No, certainly not: Marrable knew well enough that he never took anything. He was aware, in the inner recesses of his brain, of a curious glowing heat. He could see it with his mind's eye—a tiny red spark, deep down. Perhaps it was as well that he had settled to go into the

nursing-home the next day. Otherwise—probably this was just how those things happened. After all, a murderer was not a different being from the ordinary man: he was often merely one of ourselves who had been pestered and bothered until he simply could not stand it any longer—until something went cr-rrack in his head, as his own had gone. He had never realised he could feel like that himself. He would not have believed it a few hours ago. He would have put himself down as the one man in the world who was thoroughly free from primitive feelings like that. Sedulously, all his life, he had avoided anything like fighting, any suspicion of a row. Fortunately, during the Great War he had managed to get a safe job in a Government office. He had not even undertaken a Special Constable's job: he disliked extremely having to patrol at nights. And those air raids, of course, had been terrible.

Well, if Marrable meant to stay he would have to go home, that was all. In his present state, he said to himself, he simply could not stand it. Of course his last evening had been wrecked, but that was only what he might have expected. Marrable was absolutely certain to come in just that very night of all others: he might have known it. The sound of his voice behind him was almost more than he could bear. He was conscious that he could not keep the muscles of his face completely under control. Sellar, his partner, he thought was looking at him rather narrowly. And as he dealt the cards he could see his hand shaking. A curious sensation came over him—exactly as though someone had sliced away the back of his head and all the brains were running out.

"I'm on the verge," Pontifex said to himself, "Absolutely on the edge of a break-down. I wonder what I ought to do."

A good thing, after all, that he had to go to that nursing-home the next morning. That was the one bright spot about the whole thing: the coming operation did not loom so

terribly before him as it had. Perhaps it might almost turn out to be a blessing in disguise.

He started to walk back from the club along the Embankment, slipping away quietly at the end of a rubber, with Marrable still sitting there and making a nuisance of himself all round. How blessed it was to get out into the open air, all by himself! And how quiet it was there! Cleopatra's Needle, and the Belgian memorial opposite. (Surely that woman's neck was ridiculously long!) How well he remembered the Zeppelins coming over! He had watched one of them from his window up in the Temple there, with all the shells bursting round her—a silvery, cigar-shaped thing caught in the beam of a dozen search-lights. Just such another night as that. He leaned against the parapet and looked down on the smoothly flowing river. Something pressed against his chest, and he felt in his pocket for the cause. Of course! he had quite forgotten it—the Swedish knife that his nephew had wanted for a birthday present: he had looked in at Thompson's and bought it only a few minutes before going to the club, meaning to send it on from there. Well, it would have to be sent from his rooms now—or the nursing-home. Murderous-looking things, those Swedish knives! You opened them out and stuck them in that solid wooden handle and they were firm as a rock. You could stab a man with a thing like that. Just as well, perhaps, that he had not remembered it a few minutes ago at the club. If it had been ready in his hand—like that——

A hand clapped him roughly on the shoulder, giving him such a start that for a minute he went quite dizzy. Then came Marrable's voice.

"Now then, none o' that. Will you come along quiet, or shall I 'ave to tyke yer?" And then that high, cackling laugh.

It was the laugh that finished him. He could not stand that noise. It oppressed him as though an actual physical pain had shot through him, spurring him to sudden action.

He turned and leapt at the man like some wild animal. As he leapt he fancied he could hear a sort of snarling cry of rage: it sounded quite outside himself, and yet he felt, somehow, it proceeded from his own mouth. Marrable, compared with himself, was a big, powerful man; but the attack took him so much by surprise that he went over with hardly a struggle or a sound. His arms went up and waved in the air as he tried frantically to maintain his balance: then his foot seemed to catch in something and he went over backwards, Pontifex on the top of him. He had got a firm grip of his collar with his left hand at that first leap, and with his right, holding the Swedish knife, he stabbed twice, fiercely, as they lay on the pavement. He could feel the point sink in—deep: his whole soul revelled in the feeling. That would do for Marrable: that would stop him talking in the club for a bit—at any rate in that silly, high-pitched voice. Damn it! something had snapped in his head again, and there was a red mist in front of everything. The body beneath him had gone quite limp.

Pontifex let go, and scrambled up unsteadily. He could not see very well, but there was the body lying huddled on the pavement. The hat had flown off and was lying in the gutter. Marrable was quiet enough now. Not a sound had he uttered since that silly pretence of being a policeman. Damn him! He had brought it on himself, clapping him on the shoulder suddenly, like that, and laughing just in the way he hated most. Any man would have gone for him, playing a silly trick like that. All the same——

He became suddenly conscious of the knife still grasped in his hand. It was as though it stung him, like a snake, and he hurled it out over the parapet into the river with a gesture of repulsion. That was the luck of the thing, too: just the sort of thing that would happen to him of all people —that he should have been holding that knife, ready in its shaft, at the precise moment when Marrable came along. He just *had* to strike out at him. The purest nervous reflex action. But—they would hardly be likely to accept that

if they got him in the dock, with some parchment-faced old judge sitting to try him. Murder—they would call it. Murder!

Pontifex felt he could not stay there another moment, on any consideration. He was seized with a panic. Fortunately, there was not a soul in sight—unless that was a figure of a man in the distance slinking along by the other side of the road, towards Charing Cross. The lamps along the Embankment threw dark shadows here and there, but none of them moved. So far as he could see, he was absolutely alone.

His instinct was to run—run away as swiftly as he could—before anyone appeared. He took two or three steps, but no! it would never do to be seen running, especially at that hour. The first policeman who saw him would obviously wonder what was up, and stop him, and begin to ask questions. What he had to do was to get back to his rooms in the Temple as soon as possible without attracting attention. He would turn up the next dark street and get into the Strand, where there was always traffic enough to make a man inconspicuous. And by the grace of God he reached the Strand, up the next street, without meeting anyone at all.

He was in the Strand, turning towards the Temple. But even as he turned the thought came to him that he did not want to go up those wooden stairs, to that lonely room of his, letting himself into a dark passage with his key and fumbling for the switch of the electric light. He would never have the courage to go to bed. Marrable would haunt him—or he would be fancying every moment that he heard the footsteps of avenging Law slowly coming up, the steps creaking, the halt outside, and then the thundering crash of the knocker on the door. How could he possibly stand that—all through the night? No! he certainly could not go to bed that night. Why should he go to bed at all? The next morning he was due at the nursing-home. They could not very well trace him there, arrest him under the

very surgeon's knife, and carry him off to trial. Only a few hours ago he had been dreading that operation: now he welcomed it.

There was Big Ben striking. It was only ten o'clock yet. A few minutes before he had been sitting at the bridge-table playing a rubber, with Marrable close behind him. Why should he not go back there? He wanted company. Besides, it might possibly be useful if he got back in time to cut in again for the next rubber. No one had seen him go out, so far as he knew: at the Camisis the hall porter was often away from his post at that hour of the night: he might easily be able to slink in again and hang up his hat and pretend he had only gone into the other room when they had cut him out. At any rate he would be in the light and the company of his fellows. He turned round.

Of course, at the worst, it was all an accident. He had never meant to kill him. The merest outbreak of nervous irritation—and no wonder—with a man coming up behind like that playing the goat. And no one had seen him: he was certain of that; nor was it in the least likely that anyone would suspect him of a crime of violence. His reputation at the club would be in his favour. Never had he been anything but the most peaceable of men—too peaceable: he had stood things without a murmur that anyone else would have resented: he had almost become a by-word—the sort of man who could be insulted with absolute impunity.

Well, Marrable would not insult him any more now, at any rate.

Pontifex began to wonder what the police were doing. Had they found the body. Surely someone must have stumbled across it by now. What happened when one found a dead body? His mind, it seemed to him, was working with preternatural speed, rather as though a series of pictures were being projected on a screen in front of him. He saw a constable, slowly striding along the Embankment, suddenly confronted by Marrable's huddled form; then kneeling down, making a hasty examination, rising suddenly and

putting the whistle to his mouth to summon assistance. In a minute the deserted Embankment is alive with hurrying figures. Scotland Yard, the C. I. D., the Big Five—or whatever the papers called them. Cold-eyed, scientific men, trained observers. Sleuths, examining everything they saw with pocket lenses, in the manner of Sherlock Holmes. Heavens! they might even be able to follow his footsteps. Hastily he glanced round, half convinced that he must be leaving a visible track behind. His senses seemed so acute now that he almost persuaded himself that he could see marks on the grey pavement. And that noise—surely that was the note of a policeman's whistle?

A hunted man! That was what he had become now. They were after him: the whole force of Society was marshalled against him. Could he escape? Did they ever get away? Why, of course they did—in real life: it was only in fiction that the detective always triumphed. Think of the number of cases that happened years ago, in which the murderers had never been found out to this day. It only needed common sense, and the avoidance of obvious mistakes. That was where criminals always slipped up: they made some silly blunder in the heat of the moment that gave the whole show away.

If he could only stop thinking a little! It seemed to him that his mind was racing, like the propeller of a steamer jerked clear of the water. That knife of his now! Ought he to have thrown it away like that, into the river. They might find it. Oh yes, it sounded absurd, but that was just the sort of thing that always happened: they might sweep it up in a net or something and trace it to him. They could not help tracing it, once found. Of course he ought never to have thrown it away—only he felt that he simply could not keep it any longer: it burnt his hand: it might have been made of red-hot iron. Why, the shop where he had bought it was only a few yards off. To be sure, he had not been there before, so far as he recollected—but that was nothing: they would parade him for inspection and he would be recog-

nised. He saw the picture as clearly as anything: there he stood in a row of figures, inwardly shivering, trying to look composed; and there was Thompson's assistant, the man who had sold him the knife, walking down the line slowly, scrutinising them one by one. Oh, it was hopeless. The man would recognise him at once, of course.

He had only walked a few yards while all this passed through his mind. And then he caught sight of himself reflected in a shop window, and the sight gave him such a shock that he all but fell down. In fact he did stagger, and had to catch hold of a lamp-post to steady himself. He was without a hat.

Well, that did for him, of course. His hat must have fallen off when he and Marrable were having that struggle, and in the excitement of the moment he had never noticed it. It must be lying there still, a damning piece of evidence —unless by some chance it had fallen into the river, or been blown away into the Embankment Gardens or somehow managed to dispose of itself. But to think of him coming all that way without discovering that he had left it behind! He had put it on at the club before leaving—yes! of course he had—a man did not go out into the streets from his club and leave his hat on the peg. He must have been dazed by the fall when they had gone down together. It had been a bit of a crash, and it was some time before he recovered himself. He remembered seeing a hat lying there, in the gutter, too. He shivered.

Perhaps there was just a chance still—if he went straight back—down the next turning. It was the only chance. There were not many people about that night, and it was only a minute or two since it had happened. If he could only get there before the police! They would never suspect him if he were the first to discover the body and give the alarm. His hat had blown off and he was following it up when he ran into this—terrible thing. That would be his story.

He turned immediately down the next street, almost

brushing against a man at the corner. Fortunate that the fellow never seemed to look at him. No one had noticed him, apparently, walking along hatless on an autumn night. That was what he had always maintained: Londoners were extraordinarily unobservant: unless you were dressed in regular fancy costume they would never stop to look at you —and not always then. After all, too, a number of young men had taken to going about the streets hatless.

He was on the Embankment again—and once more there did not seem to be a soul in sight. What extraordinary luck! His heart gave a bound, and he hurried on towards the spot. Ah! he was barely in time: there were two or three men approaching from the opposite direction. Well, he would get there first and give the alarm. There was his hat, just in front of him, and there was the huddled mass of clothes, still lying on the pavement. He waved his hands and shouted to the little party who were advancing. They took no notice.

"Silly fools!" he thought angrily. They must have seen him.

And then, suddenly, he heard a voice—the well-known squeaky, high-pitched voice of Marrable. There he was, in the centre of the approaching group, explaining what had happened.

"I give you my word," he was saying, "I only just touched the poor chap on the back. Must have been nervous, for he gave no end of a jump and his arms went up, just like that. Thought he was going to hit me. Didn't like the look of him at all. And then the poor old chap collapsed suddenly, before you could say knife, and fell on his face. I thought I'd better come and let you know."

A man in constable's uniform bent down and turned the huddled figure over gently.

"'Art, it looks like," he said. And Pontifex found himself looking down at his own face.

# FROST IN APRIL [1]

*By* MALACHI WHITAKER

From *The New Adelphi*

The farm of Harry Inn Corner stood high and alone on a moorland shoulder. It faced west. On its south side rose an untidy stone shed, called the mistal, in which twenty cows were housed, and behind it was a grey-green, neglected garden, where coarse grass grew in uneven clumps. Just in front of the house, a stony road ran, twisting to the right within sighting distance, continuing downhill until it found a sanctuary of trees, and there, apparently, vanishing. To the left, it ran an unseen distance of three miles, up and down the inhospitable shoulder, hedged with windblown thorns and black, forgotten brambles, past only Joyts and Pennypot—farms a field's length from the lane—until it joined the main road for Farchester at Starting Post.

The wife of the farmer was a little woman, with a red, tight-drawn skin, and great brown terrified eyes. She started in a painful way at any sound from the outside world, yet she always spoke loudly, repeating what she said two, and sometimes three times, "You gi' me a fright, I say, you gi' me a fright." The jerky ticking of the octagonal wall clock was the only noise she seemed really to understand, and to draw comfort from. She would stare at the clock when in any predicament, all the time softly stroking the sheepskin rug which was tied on the back of a wooden chair. She seemed to be subject to some fear which never left her, and which solitude increased slowly but inevitably.

She had six great, broad sons, inarticulate like the animals

[1] Copyright, 1929, by Malachi Whitaker.

they tended, and after them, a daughter. Tildy, short for Matilda, had been a pretty baby, with a crown of tangled bronze curls, very hard to tend. She had small, oblique blue eyes, and a voice as clear as a thrush's. But she had very little to say, keeping her voice only to sing with. She inherited the tight-drawn, red skin of her mother, rough to the touch and scaly; yet she had some hidden charm that drew a second glance. Occasionally, the moorland wind hurt her eyes, making them red and sore, and she would look away when speaking to anybody.

Tom Morris, the father, appeared to be the only normal member of the family. He was a neat man, with straw-coloured hair and moustache, a very pleasing tenor voice, and a fondness for breeding canaries. He sang in the chapel choir, and had a religious bias. Yet, seeing him in the farm kitchen, humming to himself as he wiped his hands on the soiled towel near the sink where the pump was, you might have found in him an answer to a strange riddle. He loved his canaries, and his singing practice, and made a great show of working hard at the farm; but if there was any labour that could be put on to another's shoulders, he would contrive to do it in a way that was not, at first glance, discernible.

The six sons, uncouth lads, grew up into strong, heavy men. As soon as they were of an age, they married and left home, with just enough knowledge and ambition to be labouring hinds for other men. They seemed eager to leave the farm in which they were born and reared, and never returned even so much as for a visit at Christmas, or Easter, or other festival. If they had cared for their baby sister, they never showed it, but sometimes the little girl and her mother would set off and call on the nearest ones, and play with their sturdy children, and turn back home as darkness fell.

The youngest son had done well for himself. He had married an idiot girl whose grandmother had died and left her five hundred pounds and a house of furniture. His

brothers envied him, because he need only work for two or three days a week. But the idiot girl proved prolific, and with a steadily increasing flock of children, he found that in spite of his wife's wealth, he would have to look for regular work. Everybody in the district was well supplied, so with a sinking heart he returned to work for his father. Marriage and money had a little armed him, and while his father offered him the barest pittance for wage, he on his part stipulated that he should not arrive at the farm before six o'clock, until after the morning milking was over, and the milk in the cans all ready to take to the station. He did not often work near the house.

With the sons men and away, and the girl now seventeen, life should have been easier for Mrs. Morris; but it never was. The house was a large one. There was an unused parlour, stuffy with inherited lumber, and earth-smelling from the green plants which entirely filled the small window space. There was a large living kitchen, the floor of which constantly echoed to the clatter of iron-rimmed footwear. There were stone-floored sculleries, pantries and passages, all to scrub interminably, besides the upstairs rooms, and the noisy, voracious, dirt-making birds in the attic. The house was always spotless, the result of unceasing labour. The farm mistress's little leisure was spent in mending torn clothing, seated in a chair beneath the great paraffin lamp which hung from the centre of the dark ceiling.

Again, the poultry were spread far and wide, and the two women had it all to tend. The poultry houses were in sheltered corners of the various fields, and it was a long way from one to another. Some of the hens were kept near to the house, and were continually squawking and flying heavily from under impatient feet into the bare branches of the few meagre trees, then back to the ground. The cows were shut up from October to May, and their gentle lowing, deep and true as an organ note, instead of breaking the silence, seemed to make it more profound.

Work at the farm began early and ended late. Winter

was a cruel time. Sometimes, as Tildy carried the forty great pails of water from the well in the road to the ship-pen, two for each cow, the child would pause, and pressing her numbed hands into her armpits, would look around her at the frozen hill-tops, and unknown desires would burst into bloom in her thin bosom, only to die as she heard her father's voice asking how much longer she was going to stand there "gapin' at nowt." The farmer far preferred sitting milking, with his head against the warm flanks of Bess or Beauty, to carrying the water in.

The dapper little farmer was proud of his daughter's capacity for work, and also of her sweet, clear voice. As soon as she was old enough, she went with him into the chapel choir, and even two or three nights a week to practise singing. The long walk to Starting Post and back home, they reckoned as nothing—indeed, they never thought of it, or dreamed of putting off a practice, no matter how bad the weather. This was innocent joy. Meantime, the mother would sit listening to the tock, tick-tock of the wall clock, her eyes wide with fear, her ears alert for alien sound. But her life was set, planned for her by her husband, and she dared not deviate from his ways. He was a miser.

At seventeen, Tildy's rebel curls had fallen into an orderly beauty. Her eyes were much stronger, and she could now, if she wished, stare back into other eyes, but the force of habit was too strong in her, and usually she looked away when addressing anybody, and appeared to be thinking of other things. Her mouth had a droop to it; she suffered much from backache, yet she did not complain, except very rarely to her mother. When she felt worse than usual, her mother would go out into the howling wind, rain, or bitter frost of the winter's dawn, and carry the heavy pails of water to the patient cattle, while her father sat snug and warm behind a cow and sang, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour" in a voice sweet enough to draw tears from the eyes of the devil himself.

It would have been easy for him to have had water laid on from the well to the byre, he was always going to do it, but he could not bear to spend the money. He grudged the coal on the fire, the butter on the bread. He grudged his son the few shillings he paid him, and never gave his daughter a penny. Yet he was a very pleasant man to talk to. When his friends came to look at his canaries, they envied his home, his birds, his cattle, his poultry. They knew he was close, yet they envied him even for that, saying he would have a tidy bit laid by. Before their eyes, Tildy mixed food for the poultry, or cleaned the byre, or swilled out the yard, clad in a thick grey frock, with a little fringed shawl tied over her hair; singing, though her hands were red and swollen.

In the summer of her nineteenth year, after the hay-making was over and done with, she met Irving Barr, and they fell in love; not so much in love as in ecstasy. He was tall, over a foot higher than she was, with a clear, tanned skin under which the blood flowed easily. He, too, had blue eyes, but they were large and full, and his lips and nostrils were clear-cut as a statue's. His hands were smooth, strong and small; they did not look like a farmer's hands. He had come with his newly widowed mother from over the hills by Adderthwaite, to an easier farm near Starting Post, known as Jonah's Eye. They were having everything up-to-date at Jonah's Eye, even a bathroom, unknown luxury. He was twenty, and unaware of his own good looks, and the effect they had on the village girls.

First, he heard Tildy's voice in the choir. She was singing a solo. From under an unfashionable hat her curls cascaded. She was looking into a dusty corner of the chapel as though she saw an angel there, and her clear voice broke through her lips like a singing spring. Not a muscle of the young man's face moved, yet at that moment, he had determined that only this girl should be his wife. As she finished singing, she brought her glance

to his, and for some seconds their looks embraced in a shaft of summer sunlight.

He tried hard to become acquainted with her, but by some means her father always managed to put him off. Mr. Morris would talk affably with him, and contrive to send Tildy home before he had chance to say one word to her. He was baffled by the unseen barrier. There was no reason for it. Here was a man with a daughter, here was a young man who wanted in a right and proper way to come courting that daughter. Yet Mr. Morris smiled and chatted, even invited him to see the canaries, but always saw to it that Tildy had no opportunity of talking to him. It was simple enough to other people. Tom Morris did not want to part with his hard-working daughter.

One night, as she was going to bed in her little room over the front passage, the girl heard a low, sweet whistle. She flushed, and, pulling on her dress, leaned out of the window. To the still figure beneath her in the garden, she whispered "Hush! Oh, please, please be quiet, father'll hear you!"

For answer, the young man looked up at her earnestly, and saying "Good-night" in low tones, he turned from her, strode through the neglected garden, vaulted the wall, and was gone. She watched him as long as she could see him in the dusk, and as she climbed into her bed, she hid her smiling face in her hands and hoped she would dream about him.

Sometimes he came to wish her good-night, and sometimes he did not. She would stand in her room, not daring to undress until there was no further likelihood of his coming. They grew to exchanging a word or two, then they talked; the fear of being found out adding a delicious zest to their conversations. One night, he persuaded her to climb out of the window, and they spent a fearful yet happy half-hour walking up and down the field.

"Why can't I come for you in the evenings, and take you out?" he asked. "There's no reason why you shouldn't come."

"Perhaps if you asked father, he'd let me," she suggested.

The following Sunday, the young man asked the older one if he could come courting Tildy.

"I'm afraid my girl's too young," he answered, with a deprecating smile. "She's only seventeen."

"Nineteen," corrected the young man, unguardedly.

"Seventeen," answered the father coldly, giving him a deadly smile. "Somebody must have been informing you wrong." And he would not say any more.

"It's no use, Tildy," Irving said, as they walked the lane late that night. "He thinks you're too young."

"Don't vex him," she said imploringly; and turned back to go home.

Winter put an end to many of their meetings, but their love grew steadily. The young man went to chapel each Sunday, and there they were able to steal glances at one another, all through the long service. Always on Sunday nights, unless snow was on the ground, and his footmarks could be seen, he came to kiss her cold, frightened lips, and to wish her good-night. At times he grew wildly angry because of her father; he wanted to climb up into her little room.

"Oh no!" she cried, because she was terrified—not afraid of him, but afraid that he should see the ill-furnished little place, with its wooden chest in place of dressing-table, and tin box in place of chair— "You mustn't say you'll come in, or I'll never open the window to you again!"

"Well, let me kiss the pillow, where you put your head," he said, and he would not be content until she brought her pillow for him to kiss.

One evening in spring, the girl asked her mother if she could go out. The father was away, and they did not expect him back until late. Her mother stared at her, and all at once put a trembling hand on her arm. She said,

"Go out, Tildy, I say go out, Tildy, before he comes. But get back before he comes back, or else—" She did not say or else what, but Tildy knew.

She met Irving as they had arranged. They walked over the far hill and up on to the moors, where last year's heather crackled beneath their feet. They talked and kissed as they walked, and could not bear to turn their footsteps homeward; but at last they had to do so.

"I shall come back again to kiss you good-night, and to see that everything's all right," he said, as they parted not too near the house.

When she entered the kitchen, pretty and flushed and warm, her father was waiting for her. He had his hat on, and there was a stick laid across his knees. In the opposite doorway, her mother was standing holding her left hand up to her cheek. The girl hung back, her face paling.

"Come here, Tildy," said her father, softly smiling; and still smiling, he pinioned her hands behind her back and beat her until she screamed. Half his blows fell on the girl, and half on her mother.

When the girl went up to her room, she opened the window wide. Then she lay down on her bed, wiping away her tears with a rough cotton handkerchief. She did not get up when she heard a low whistle, nor was she afraid when her lover came and gently kissed her wet eyelids.

Haytime came round again. The lovers, each busy throughout the day, thought constantly of one another. He bought her a little ring with a blue stone in it, and she wore it all night long. He bought her, too, a wedding ring, but she could think of no safe place to hide it, and wore it tied round her middle with a piece of string. "You'll soon be wearing it," he told her confidently, "As soon as you're twenty-one—and perhaps before that—we're going to be married. I don't care how soon."

"And neither do I!" she answered joyfully, "I don't care, whatever happens."

There was just one thing they had forgotten. In late

summer, he caught a chill. A night passed, and he did not come; then two nights, three, four, five; and on the sixth, she heard from her father that he was dead.

Tom Morris had come in and sat down at the table. He had seemed full of inward pleasure about something. He began to eat, and to talk to the womenfolk. "Yes," he said, "Young Barr's dead. His mother's telling everybody that he's been out night after night wi' some lass or other, and caught his death of pneumonia."

Tildy watched the movement of her father's jaw as he chewed his food and told the tale of her lover's death, with malice, with amusement. How much did he know as he told it? She rose abruptly from the table, and went upstairs into her room. She stood near the window, looking out into the pale blue sky. There was a pink reflection from the sunset. She did not see it. She had not yet realized the full meaning of her father's words, only that something dreadful, unspeakable, had happened to her.

She heard the sound of footsteps, and turned blindly to hold the door. She was too late; her mother had crept into the room. She put her hand on her daughter's hair, and whispered, "Don't take on, Tildy, I say, don't take on."

The girl did not move. She said, with difficulty, "Does father say he's dead?"

Her mother did not answer; only stroked the girl's hair.

"Is it true? Have *you* heard?" she asked sharply, watching her mother's eyes.

The older woman nodded. "I've known sin' dinnertime," she said.

The girl shook off her mother's hand.

A week later, Tom Morris again went away. He had whistled and sung all the week long, and did not appear to have a care in the world. As soon as he was gone, the girl put on a long black coat of her mother's. It had great pouched sleeves, and much material in it, and would have looked a caricature of a coat on anybody less scared and sad. Then she put on a black hat of her own.

"I'm going, mother," she said.

Her mother was manifestly afraid. "I s'll be that uneasy until you come back," she said. "Promise me, Tildy, you won't do anything rash. I wish I could come with you."

"Oh mother, do come! Lock up and come. I daren't go without you. Put on your black shawl. We'll hurry back as soon as we've seen it. If you're not with me, I don't know what'll happen."

She had gathered a few late wildflowers, and, holding these tenderly in her hand, the girl went with her mother to the graveyard, and saw her lover's grave. Her mother looked about to see that nobody was near as she hid her few blossoms close to the earth, beneath the conventional hothouse wreaths, which were already withering. The pale yellow October sun, about to vanish behind a cloud, threw its last beams on the two women, who hurried through their sad task as if they were thieves at work. Then they stood up, and with their faces hidden, turned towards home.

As they entered the yard, nothing was changed. The hens still flew heavily and protestingly into the branches at their approach; then out again. A cow lowed; then another, and another; and again the silence was deeper.

Tildy changed into her grey dress, tied the little fringed shawl over her head, and made the first of her trips from the well to the byre. As she carried the heavy buckets, she slowly lifted her gaze from the stony path beneath her feet until it rested among the stars.

She had not before realized that one could see so far.

# THE RAID [1]

*By* GEORGE A. BIRMINGHAM

From *The Forum*

"Did you hear what he's after saying?" said Mr. Brophy. "I did hear it," said Peter Joyce sullenly. Then there was silence. Joyce lifted his tumbler to his lips and finished his beer at a draught. Mr. Brophy, anticipating an order which was sure to come, filled the tumbler again. The two men were together in the taproom of the Connaught Eagle Hotel. Mr. Brophy, the proprietor, stood behind the bar. Peter Joyce, the local postmaster, faced him.

"'Ireland is a disappointment to me.' Them was his words," said Mr. Brophy.

"Damned impudence I call it," said Joyce. "But sure them Americans is always impudent."

He stared fixedly at his tumbler for some time as if he were greatly surprised to find that it was not empty. It may have been the sight of the beer in it which inspired him to suggest a retort which might have been made to the American's insult.

"It could be," he said, "that it's him that is a disappointment to Ireland."

He spoke in a tone of great bitterness, as a good man ought to speak when his native land has been insulted by a stranger. Mr. Brophy—a fat man and therefore milder of temper—was more tolerant.

"I wouldn't go altogether as far as to say that," he said. "He has the money, plenty of it. You can see that by him

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coming here in a motor car, and what's more he's willing to spend it."

A man who has money and is willing to spend it is never a disappointment to a hotel keeper.

They were talking about Mr. Skinner—Homer Blake Skinner. He was a citizen of the U. S. A. and apparently a distinguished man. His card stood propped up against the whiskey bottles on a shelf behind the bar. On it, under Mr. Skinner's name, were the words, "Vice President of the Fraternity of the Knights of Liberty." It is a distinction to be Vice President of anything, even of an Order of Ancient Buffaloes or Mediæval Elks. To be a high official of a Fraternity of Knights is something very fine indeed. It is no wonder that such a man has money and spends it freely. Mr. Brophy was proud of having Mr. Skinner as a guest in his hotel.

" 'Ireland's a disappointment to me,' " Mr. Brophy repeated. "That's what he said. 'There's more demonstrations in favor of liberty in Chicago in a week,' he said, 'than there is in the whole of Ireland in a year.' "

"I heard him," said Joyce, still sullenly.

"If it was murders he meant, and robberies and the like," said Mr. Brophy, "we've had enough of that sort of work here. They can do what they like in Chicago. But we want no more of them demonstrations in favor of liberty."

Having taken his part, though not a very active one, in the Irish revolution, Mr. Brophy had discovered that even the most patriotic acts have to be paid for in the end, chiefly by men like himself who have something to pay with. He was of the opinion that a little peace and quiet were desirable for a change. He spoke the mind of most of his fellow countrymen.

"What he said was this," said Joyce. " 'You're a poor-spirited lot over here.' Them was his words."

Joyce snorted with indignation as he repeated them. It is never pleasant to be called poor-spirited. It was particularly galling to Peter Joyce, because the reproach was

unjust. Twice during the years of Ireland's war for independence he had robbed his own post office, choosing on each occasion a time when there was a good deal of money in the safe. Each robbery had been reported in the papers as a "daring outrage." The hero of such exploits ought not to be called poor-spirited by a vagrant American.

"I was thinking," said Mr. Brophy mildly, "that seeing how he has money to spend, and is willing to spend it, we might be able to oblige him with a demonstration in favor of liberty while he's here!"

For the second time Joyce finished his beer at a draught. Indignation, especially righteous indignation, promotes thirst. Mr. Brophy immediately supplied him with a glass of whiskey. Beer is a sleepy drink and has a deadening effect upon the mind. Pure spirit, so Mr. Brophy believed, stimulates the brain. He had a proposal to make which might easily be misunderstood.

"Supposing now," he said "that there was to be a raid on the post office, and whatever was in it was to be took—money and postal orders and stamps?"

"I'll not have that done," said Joyce.

"Whatever was took," said Mr. Brophy persuasively, "would be brought back the next day, so there wouldn't be any trouble with the government."

"I tell you I'll not have it," said Joyce firmly.

"Come now, Peter," said Mr. Brophy, "It's for the good of the people of the district. Mr. Skinner will pay the expenses of the raid, whatever they may be, and I needn't tell you that expenses can be made up to a decent sum if you go the right way about it."

But this appeal to his local patriotism left Joyce unmoved.

"I'll not agree to it," he said, "and the reason I won't is this: Mrs. Joyce is in a delicate state of health at the present time, and if there was to come a crowd of fellows with their faces blacked, roaring and yelling round the

house in the middle of the night, it might be the death of her."

Mr. Brophy, a reasonable and kindly man, saw the force of this objection.

"We'll say no more about it, Peter," he said. "If I'd known it was that way with Mrs. Joyce, I'd never have asked you."

"If there's to be a raid," said Joyce, "and I give in to you that it would be a good thing if the American is willing to pay for it, why wouldn't you have it in your own hotel?"

Mr. Brophy had a sound reason for objecting to that. A raid on a hotel, with a taproom and a bar in it, would almost certainly end in a scene of disgraceful drunkenness. No one could be expected to resist the temptation offered by the chance of free drinks, and, although everything else taken could be given back, whiskey, once consumed, could not.

There was, unfortunately, no bank in the town. Indeed, there was only one house in the whole neighborhood sufficiently large and important to be of any use as the scene of a demonstration in favor of liberty. That was the house called—as such houses often are in Ireland—the Castle, which was owned and inhabited by Colonel Longways.

"I wonder now," said Mr. Brophy thoughtfully, "if the Colonel would have any objections to our raiding the Castle to-night or to-morrow."

"If shooting the Colonel is what you're thinking of," said Joyce, "I'd not be in favor of it."

Colonel Longways was one of the few Irish gentlemen who came through the revolutionary war safe in body and unharmed in property. Neither Joyce nor anyone else had ever been in favor of shooting him, or even of burning down his house. The Colonel had a reputation for ruthlessness and was known to be an unusually good shot with

a revolver. He had a butler, a sour North of Ireland man, who had once been a sergeant in the Grenadiers. It was well understood that he was just as likely to shoot with deadly intent as his master was. It was felt, not only by Peter Joyce but by all his friends, that anyone who went out to shoot the Colonel was very likely to be shot himself.

"I wasn't thinking of shooting him," said Mr. Brophy, "for that's a thing that nobody would be willing to try. But what harm would it do him if there was to be a raid made on his house and maybe her ladyship's jewels took?"

Lady Angela Longways, the Colonel's wife, owned some valuable emeralds, and this was well known to her neighbors.

"If we were to do that," Mr. Brophy went on, "it never could be said of us again by an American or anyone else, that we're a poor-spirited lot. We'd tell the Colonel, of course, that the jewels would be given back next day, or as soon as ever Mr. Skinner has left the locality."

"The Colonel," said Peter Joyce, "will never agree."

"He might," said Mr. Brophy.

Like most men who are making money fast, he took a cheerful view of life's possibilities.

"The Colonel," he went on, "was always a great man for anything that might be for the good of the locality, and when he hears the American is willing to pay for a demonstration in favor of liberty, he'll not see us done out of the money."

"You can try him if you like," said Peter Joyce, "but it's my opinion that he'll kick you out of the house if you do."

Here, as it turned out, Peter Joyce was wrong. Colonel Longways listened to Mr. Brophy's proposal without a sign of disapproval. In the end he agreed to allow the raid to take place.

"I knew you would," said Mr. Brophy joyfully. "Your honor would always be for helping any movement for the benefit of the people of this locality."

"Don't you be deceiving yourself about that, Brophy," said the Colonel. "I don't care a damn for the people of this locality and I wouldn't mind if they all starved. The reason I'm agreeing to this plan of yours is that I'd like to see you taking money off that American. All Americans ought to be robbed, particularly your friend Skinner. He had the cheek to come up here yesterday and talk to me in a most offensive way. It took me half an hour to get him to go."

The Colonel nourished a grievance against Americans, believing that it was owing to their greed that his income tax was as high as it was. But it is doubtful whether a mere desire for revenge would have induced him to agree to Mr. Brophy's plan. He was a man who found rich pleasure in the absurdities which flourished in Ireland and nowhere else. In England, where people are all very sensible, he would have found life intolerably dull. In Ireland, in spite of many inconveniences and some risks, he was happy because absurd things were always happening. The raid on his house struck him as just the kind of absurdity which ought to be encouraged.

"What do you want to take?"

"What we were thinking of," said Mr. Brophy modestly, "was her ladyship's jewels. But maybe that would be asking too much."

"Not a bit," said the Colonel. "What night will you come?"

"If to-night wouldn't be inconvenient to your honor, it would suit us."

"Very well," said the Colonel, "I'll have the jewels ready packed up for you in a bag and put on the front hall table. I don't want men in dirty boots tramping all over the house and dropping lighted cigarette ends on the carpets. Understand that, Brophy? The jewels will be on the table just inside the door, and nobody is to come a step further."

Brophy promised, without hesitation, that every member

of the raiding party would wipe his boots carefully before he entered the hall. He went further and offered to arrange that the leader of the party, the man who actually stepped forward for the jewels, should take off his boots before he did so. Then he made a request

"I'd be glad," he said, "if your honor will give me leave to tell Peter Joyce that you won't shoot him. Peter is a nervous poor fellow, and he's in terrible dread of you. It's on that account that I mentioned the matter, though I know well enough that you wouldn't do the like."

"You know nothing of the sort, Brophy," said the Colonel. "As a matter of fact, nothing on earth would give me greater pleasure than to shoot Peter Joyce through the head. I dare say I'll do it some day, but I won't do it to-night. I won't so much as put a bullet through the calf of his leg. You can tell him that from me."

"And you won't let Mr. Harris shoot?" said Mr. Brophy. "For to tell you the truth, Peter's very near as much frightened of him as he is of you."

Harris was the North of Ireland Guardsman butler, and there is little doubt that Peter Joyce had good grounds for his fear. It would have given Harris sincere pleasure to shoot the postmaster.

"Harris," said the Colonel, "shan't even carry a revolver, so you can tell Joyce that he will be perfectly safe unless he manages to shoot himself. But you'd better warn him to be careful about that. If he's as nervous as you say he is, he ought to leave his cartridges at home."

"I'll tell him that," said Mr. Brophy.

"Very well," said the Colonel, "I'll expect you between one and two to-morrow morning. I'll try not to be asleep, but you'd better make a good deal of noise banging on the door in case I happen to have dosed off."

There was little difficulty in obtaining volunteers for the raid once it was made clear that the Colonel had promised not to shoot and that Mr. Skinner's allowance for expenses

would be generous. Mr. Brophy felt safe in promising this. The Colonel's reputation for ferocity enabled him to represent this demonstration in favor of liberty as a desperate adventure. He hoped to be able to persuade Mr. Skinner to promise large financial aid.

"They do say," he said to Mr. Skinner, "that the Colonel thinks no more of shooting a man than I would of drowning a kitten."

Peter Joyce, who was present during the interview, added his testimony.

"There's many a poor fellow," he said, "will be brought home to-night on a shutter. That's the kind of man the Colonel is."

"And that old reprobate Harris," said Mr. Brophy, "is worse than what the Colonel is."

"There's nothing that fellow would like better," said Peter Joyce, "than to be washing himself in the blood of the people of this locality."

"They tell me," said Mr. Brophy, "that the Colonel could turn his back and look the other way and shoot you dead at the same time. That's the kind of a man he is."

"So as it makes no odds where you are," said Peter Joyce. "You might be behind the door where he couldn't see you at all, but he'd get you just the same."

"Now in the matter of any little expenses that may be incurred—" said Mr. Brophy, who felt that he had prepared the way for a large subscription.

But it was unnecessary to make any stronger appeal. The account given of the Colonel's fierceness and skill had evidently produced the desired effect on Mr. Skinner. He cheerfully offered to pay a sum even larger than Mr. Brophy had intended to ask. Indeed, the effect produced on him was greater than either Joyce or Brophy intended. Mr. Skinner firmly refused to join the raiding party himself.

This, though unexpected, was not altogether a disappointment. Since the Colonel intended to submit quite peacefully to the carrying off of his wife's jewels, it might

have been difficult to keep up his reputation for bloodthirstiness, and if Mr. Skinner once came to doubt that, he might perhaps be disinclined to pay all that he had promised.

"Well," said Joyce, "you can stay at home if you like, only don't be talking afterwards about the men of Ireland being a poor-spirited lot. It's us that's facing the peril to-night and not you."

"Whist now, Peter," said Mr. Brophy. "What's the use of talking that way to a gentleman who's giving what Mr. Skinner is giving in aid of a demonstration in favor of liberty?"

But Mr. Skinner, it appeared, was a man of Christian forbearance. A friendly smile was his only answer to Joyce's taunt.

At half past one a party of raiders—eight of them altogether—drove up the avenue which led to Colonel Longways' house, in two motor cars. One of the cars belonged to Mr. Brophy and the other to Peter Joyce. They were included in the expense account at five pounds each for the night's work.

The raiders, each man masked and each having his coat turned inside out, got out of the cars. They were drawn up in military formation by Peter Joyce in front of the door of the house. At a word of command two of them, armed with wooden mallets, stepped forward and hammered on the door.

"Mind yourselves now," said Mr. Brophy, who still sat in his car. "There's no sense in knocking the paint off the door, which is what you'll do if you hit it that way."

The Colonel may perhaps have had the same feeling of respect for the paint. A window upstairs opened and his head appeared.

"Who's there?" he asked, "and what do you want?"

"Come down out of that and open the door!" shouted Joyce with truculent savageness. "You'll know soon enough who we are and what we're wanting."

Then another window opened in the top story of the house, and another head appeared. It was a moonlight night and Harris was plainly recognizable. "I have my gun here," he said, "and if you're not out of that before I count ten, I'll shoot."

Then, since religious feelings are apt to find expression in moments of strong excitement, he shouted, "To hell with the Pope!"

If anyone had failed to recognize Harris, that war cry would have told who he was. The raiders looked at each other doubtfully. They had Mr. Brophy's assurance, based on the Colonel's promise, that Harris would not shoot. But there was a terrifying threat in the tone in which he counted "one, two, three, four." The whole plan might have been wrecked by the precipitate flight of the raiders if the Colonel had not interfered. Turning his head and peering upwards, he shouted to Harris:

"Stop that nonsense, Harris. Come down and open the door."

The scene, when the door was opened, was quite in the best tradition of midnight raids. A band of masked men, each one of them flourishing a revolver, stood in the doorway. The Colonel, in his pyjamas, stood in the middle of the hall. Behind him, unarmed, but looking dangerous, was Harris, who had slipped on a pair of trousers and tucked a cotton night shirt into them. In the background was Lady Angela in a lace-trimmed dressing gown, giggling hysterically. "Hands up!" said Peter Joyce.

The Colonel put his up and turned to Harris, who was thinking of making a rush at Joyce.

"Don't be an ass, Harris. Put up your hands when you're told."

Harris obeyed. But there was a defiant gleam in his eyes.

"Must I put mine up?" said Lady Angela meekly.

"You need not," said Peter Joyce.

Mr. Brophy, who had come to the door, added politely, "Sure nobody wants to put your ladyship to the least inconvenience."

Peter Joyce stepped forward toward the table on which lay a small brown leather bag.

"Come back out of that, Peter," said Mr. Brophy. "Didn't I tell you to wipe your feet before you went into the house? Have you no manners?"

Peter Joyce stepped back at once and rubbed the soles of his boots on the doormat. He even went further. Taking a scarf from the neck of the raider who stood next him, he began to polish the upper part of his boots. But this was more than the Colonel desired.

"Come on, man. Don't waste time. I'm tired standing here with my hands above my head. If you don't hurry up, I might be tempted to have a shot at you after all."

Joyce dropped the scarf, stepped forward, and took the bag. Then he fumbled for his pocket for some time. As his coat was inside out, it was not easy to find the pocket. In the end he succeeded in drawing out of it a somewhat crumpled envelope. He offered it to the Colonel.

"What's that?" said Colonel Longways.

It was Mr. Brophy, still in the background, who replied.

"It's a receipt for her ladyship's jewels," he said, "signed by myself and Mr. Joyce."

"I have it stamped with the office stamp," said Joyce, "the same as if it was a postal order, so as you'd be sure it's all right."

"Quite unnecessary," said the Colonel.

"We'd be better satisfied if your honor would take it," said Mr. Brophy. "You can give it back to us to-morrow or the next day, when we give you back the jewels, which is what we'll do as soon as ever Mr. Skinner is satisfied that we took them off you."

There was a scene of high festivity in the taproom of the Connaught Eagle Hotel when the raiders returned. Mr. Brophy, having broken several important laws already, felt

that it was no use being fastidiously careful to keep the regulations which prohibit the sale of alcoholic drinks after a certain hour. He served whiskey, beer, and other beverages to all who asked for them. Mr. Skinner, who seemed delighted with the success of the raid, said that he would pay for all that was drunk. The bag, with its precious contents, stood on the bar for all to see. Mr. Skinner was even allowed to peep inside, and was rewarded with a vision of a large number of jewelers' cases—the sort of leather-covered, velvet-lined boxes in which jewels are sold and sometimes kept.

The health of the Irish Republic was drunk and "God Save Ireland" was sung with uproarious fervor. Mr. Skinner's health was drunk, and Mr. Brophy, in a high-pitched tenor, led the singing of "He's a Jolly Good Fellow." Mr. Brophy's health was drunk, so was Mr. Joyce's, so was that of every member of the raiding party. When the last man had been duly honored, the health drinking began again with the Irish Republic and the whole list was worked through a second time. Mr. Brophy joyfully added the price of bottle after bottle to the lengthening bill of expenses. Mr. Skinner, who appeared to be perfectly reckless, encouraged everyone to ask for more and more. Time sped on, as time does when men are entirely happy. The dawn began to show dimly through the smoke-grimed windows. Several members of the party were asleep on the floor. Peter Joyce was leaning over the bar with his head on his outstretched arms. Mr. Brophy was trying, not very successfully, to add up the price of the drinks supplied. He was annoyed to find that the total came to something different each time he did the sum.

The noise of a motor engine roused Peter Joyce.

"What's that?" he said.

Mr. Brophy looked up from his accounts. The engine raced noisily. There were explosions from an exhaust pipe. There was a shrill clamor of changing gears. Peter Joyce looked around him.

"Where's Mr. Skinner?" he said.

Two drunken raiders, hearing the name of their benefactor, began to sing "He's a Jolly Good Fellow"—but Mr. Skinner was not there to acknowledge their courtesy.

"Where's her ladyship's jewels?" said Mr. Brophy wildly.

The bag, so daringly captured from Colonel Longways, was no longer on the counter where it had lain all the evening. Like Mr. Skinner, it had disappeared.

Mr. Brophy made a staggering rush to the door. Peter Joyce, with great difficulty, followed him. They were just in time to see Mr. Skinner and his car disappear round a bend of the road. There was little doubt, even in their muddled minds, that he had the jewels with him.

It was noonday before Mr. Brophy and Peter Joyce were able to take counsel together. Till then they had been engaged in the difficult business of getting sober. When they met, they were bitter and despondent. They cursed Mr. Skinner. They cursed all Americans with a comprehensive malediction. They cursed each other. They cursed each member of the raiding party. They cursed the Colonel and they cursed their luck. Then, having exhausted all known forms of blasphemy, they faced the situation.

"He's gone without paying a penny for the drinks that was consumed," said Mr. Brophy.

"And the fellows we took along with us up to the Castle," said Peter Joyce, "will be asking for the money that we promised them."

"Let them ask," said Mr. Brophy. "If that was all, I wouldn't care. But we've given a receipt to the Colonel for the jewels and he'll make us pay."

"He'll do worse than that," said Peter Joyce.

"There is no worse than that," said Mr. Brophy. "Them jewels is worth thousands of pounds."

"There is worse."

"What worse?"

"This worse," said Peter Joyce. "When he finds out the way he's been deceived, he'll shoot."

"Let him, said Mr. Brophy. "I'd as soon be shot as not if everthing that I have is to be took from me."

These were the words of courageous despair. But, though the despair remained, the courage vanished a moment later.

Colonel Longways walked into the room.

"I hear," he said, "that the American has gone, so I came to fetch her ladyship's jewels. Here's the receipt." He laid the crumpled envelope on the table. "I hope you got plenty of money out of him, Brophy, before he went. That show of yours last night was worth fifty pounds at least."

Mr. Brophy stared helplessly at Peter Joyce. Peter, convinced that the Colonel had a revolver in his pocket, crept under the table.

"Where are the jewels?" said Colonel Longways.

Mr. Brophy dropped on his knees and tried to join Peter Joyce under the table. It was unfortunately a small table and Mr. Brophy was large. There was not room for two. A very undignified scramble ensued.

"Come along out of that," said Colonel Longways. "The jewels are perfectly safe. You can't surely be such fools as to think I let you have them last night. Why, all you took away with you was a leather bag and half a dozen boxes with strings of beads in them."

It was Mr. Brophy who first realized the meaning of what the Colonel said. He crept out from the corner of the table which sheltered him and rose slowly to his feet.

"Gosh!" he said, "but that's great. I declare to God, your honor, I'd pay the money I've lost twice over—and mind you I've lost a lot—but I'd pay it twice over for the sight of Skinner's face when he finds out the way you've done him. I don't know did ever I meet a man I hate worse than I hate him. But it would satisfy me if I could see his face this minute."

Peter Joyce recovered from his terror more slowly, but he faced the Colonel at last.

"So you needn't be shooting me after all," he said.

"Not to-day," said the Colonel. "But I expect I shan't be able to resist the temptation for very long. Keep out of my way as much as you can."

"I will, your honor," said Peter Joyce. "I surely will."

# THE RUINING OF DROMA-CURRIG[1]

*By* DANIEL CORKERY

From *Columbia*

It was a deserted-looking place between the main road and the sea, and because I could find no one to tell me of it, the whole countryside was so desolate, I took the bye road that I thought must lead to it. I had not gone far when I found myself staring at a large old mansion set in a ring of stubborn trees. It was gone gray in color, wood-work and all, and the three or four stone steps that led to the hall door had long since become unsettled; dandelion and tall grasses were growing up vigorously between the stones of them. The garden roundabout was a wilderness. Only with difficulty one followed the path in it. It brought me into some cobblestoned passages, also grass-grown, which were flanked with what were once well-set-out stabling for, it was clear, a large number of animals. Neither garden nor house had prepared me for such a range of stables, and I looked about me in some wonderment noticing more particularly than anything else how utterly the southern sunshine and the winds from the sea had cleansed the place from any sign or smell of the horses: the stalls were shutterless, doorless, and looking at them one had the same feeling as when a person turns out his pockets to show us how empty they are.

I wandered round and round and at last discovered a sort of pathway that should, I imagined, take me again

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to the main road. I came on an old bare-headed man sitting on a bank as if he were a portion of it, as if he had been always sitting there. The look in his eyes told me he had been watching me all the time I had been exploring that broken dwelling place. It was he who told me of the ruining of the property, and something like this was his way of telling it:

## I

'Tis only too well I remember every twist and turn of that long day, and the night that followed it. The news came to me maybe later than to anyone else, it was after three o'clock; and when I made over towards the house I came on the master himself, Richard Donegan, and he standing his full height in the midst of a crowd of them. I noticed how big he was, and that was but natural, for the rest of them were only a rabble of stable boys and horse boys and jockeys, jockeys in the making and jockeys that would never ride again, poor creatures that their misfortunes had twisted and broken. Tough they were, hardy and tough, but undersized, as was best for them. Himself was taking no heed of them. His eyes were glaring across the fields, out on the sea, and a flood of speech was gushing from his lips. "I haven't looked at a horse for six weeks," he was saying, "I haven't mounted a back for two months—maybe ye don't know what I'm meaning by that?"

Well, we were hard put to think what was right to say to him, we were only poor hands at comforting a man in distress. Our voices and our way of speech itself were again' us. Some of us were saying, "Yes," and others "No," and others again only saying, "Don't, Master"—saying it over and over again like what you'd say to a child. Maybe after all it didn't matter what we said, because 'twas little of it he noticed, his own flood of thoughts was that hot and strong within him. There he was staring over the heads of us across the pasture lands, not knowing

how many of us were there nor who was absent. But 'tis often I thought since that the very smell of our clothes, the smell of the horses from us, and the look in our eyes, and our bony chins, and our big woollen mufflers, and our buttons, and straps, and leggings and all, were good for him in the way he was. For 'twas true what he said, that he hadn't flung a leg over a horse since his wife was given over. Indeed maybe he couldn't have a better medicine to relieve the poor foolish heart within him than the crowd of us to be there about him with the smell of the stables all over us. But that was a thing he didn't understand then nor indeed any of the rest of us either. He began to moan about his poor wife, saying that we could never understand what she was to him, saying that he knew he was a hard man and a wild man, but that his heart would now be empty for evermore, and that no one could comfort him. And although we knew he had some drink in him, as was only natural, we began to imagine that maybe after all he was not at bottom the harum-scarum creature we thought he was. He'd shake his head above us and cry out that his wife was always the flower of the meadowland—I remember the things he said quite well—and the star of the gentle dawn, and his treasure and his hope; and that she filled the day for him with sunlight, and many other curious sayings like that. And then he'd take a change and say that he was making too bold on us, and that we should excuse him, and that he was after having a great sweep, that is, a great blow, and that he wasn't master of himself, that he didn't know what he was saying nor where he was standing nor how he passed the night. And at last he was for bringing us all into the house with him.

But the men around me whispered to me that that was the very thing the women in the house didn't want; that they were hardly done yet with the laying out of the corpse of his wife; and that they had asked some of the horse boys to take the creature out with them, and keep him away with them as long as they could. Yet in with him he

would have us go, all of us, and we had to struggle hard to get the notion out of his head. At last I said to him that the house was the women's; that 'tis little they'd thank us to go in until they had the place ready for us; but that maybe he'd come down the yard with us to my place and take a bit of food there.

I made a mistake there. He blazed out in my face for thinking that he was such a beast of a man as to let a crumb of sustenance, even one crumb, and a crumb is a small thing, pass his lips at such a time. "You mistake me, Jerry," he said, "It must be to sticks and stones I'm talking. 'Tis little ye understand a man like me. 'Tis little ye understand the nature of me. Ye know little of grief or sorrow if 'tis talking of food ye are," and then again he'd call his dead lady the flower of the meadowland and the lamp that was quenched, and a lot more like that; and last he turned on us as if he'd scatter us away from him in his indignation: "Ye're telling me to eat up and drink up or my health will fail me. What health has that poor white face inside, and it so thin too, and the candles burning on the two sides of her and the flowers smelling?" And he told us, and maybe 'twas true and maybe it was not, that 'twas often he caught his own breasts and tore them down, mad because he couldn't share some of the great strength he had in him with the poor white-faced woman who had gone so woebegone and delicate. And then he'd say that the world was badly contrived to have the good and the beautiful going so soon to the grave and useless stumps like himself spared to encumber the ground. But at last I won him over. He said that God knew he hadn't the strength to resist me, that a child could lead him, the way he was, with his mind distracted and the comfort of his house snatched away from him. The slender one who brought him victory was dead, he said, and the column was broke, and the wreath scattered, and a great many other things that he remembered in the songs and ballads, they were gushing out of his mouth as if he hadn't

to think of them at all, as if indeed he had a great store of them gathered up in his mind.

Well, I got my arm in his, and with my eye I told one of the older jockeys to keep close for fear he'd stumble on me, and with a look I told another to go back to the house and tell them where the master was gone. The rest of them followed us a little way behind and not a word out of them. He was moaning and groaning as we went along, repeating over and over again, surprising us with the names he was putting on the dead woman, surprising us all, because we knew he was no man for the books or the music. Indeed his business at that time was too big for him to have leisure for anything else. And it wasn't the business alone —though it was then at its best, with horses coming to us for training from the other end of Ireland, and from England too, because of those soft splendid fields we had and the sands below and the lonely roads that were as good to us as if the master owned every perch of them. The property is a sad sight now, a sad sight and a lonesome sight. But it wasn't the business alone, I'm saying, it was all the trouble he'd get into, he was that careless about what he'd say and what he'd promise—things he could never bring to pass—and 'twas only into court with him and out of court with him, from one case to another, and figures and names and accounts all mixed up in his brain. And besides that, we'd have accidents, and sicknesses, and losses, and victories, which were worse maybe than the losses, and lies told about us, and himself rushing up to Dublin and over to London to get the better of his enemies, and he coming home in a week or two in such a state that you wouldn't like to be looking at him—the big purple face of him so blue and shivery.

## II

We got safely beyond the garden and were coming along a path through the fields when we all lifted our heads to

the sounds of hoofs in the distance. It was a sunny afternoon in March, bright and clear, sharp enough too, and the roads were hard. The hoofs were far off when we heard them. All of us knew it was Robby Leddy bringing Starlight home—the hope of our stable—and a lovely thing she was—bringing her from the railway station; and we knew that he'd be making haste and that he'd be proud and high in his bearing, for he was after winning on her from a big field in Co. Waterford. In spite of the trouble and confusion on us all we couldn't help listening to the fall of the shoes and they so smart and ringing. Maybe the Master himself was the worst of us all for that. He stopped up his rambling hullagoning, and when I glanced up at him I saw his big mouth and it hanging open, dead and helpless, like you'd see the clab of an idiot. He had the look of a man who climbs up a desolate mountain side and then sees down below him on the other side a shining scenery, something he didn't think to see. His head was flung up and his ears, as I knew well, were full of the music. Suddenly he stepped out from us, as if he was a new man, and across the field with him making for a gate where, he knew, the horse would have to pass. We all kept by him, of course, and when we had covered about half the ground he clamped his hand down heavily on my shoulder and began to say that Robby Leddy was a good boy, and that it was kind father for him, and that 'twas the pity of the world, so 'twas, that he had such an unfortunate day for bringing such grand news home with him. What use was good luck now to any of us, he said, or prosperity, and what was one horse above another or one jockey above another? But all the same, and he even saying the words, I knew he was listening to the beating of the horse's hoofs as well as any of us.

One of the boys, his name was Timsy Gallagher, he ran ahead of us; he took away the stone and swung the gate back into the field for us to go through. Our master was the first. When he turned east he stopped up dead. And

we stopped up too. We saw him staring at a high trap that had been left standing beneath the bushes, the reins flung over one of the branches. "'Tis Denis's trap," he said, frowning as black as night; and then he barked out at us: "The news wasn't long travelling to them, I tell ye!"

But 'tis right for you to know that Denis Cashman was the brother of the woman who was after dying. He was the one man in the world that the master didn't want to see just then. He was tall and straight and hard; his mind as tough as his body. He had no talk in him, and no forgiveness. Soon after his sister married the master, the master made him a present of a hunter; but only a few weeks were gone by when Denis wanted to give the hunter back, so that he'd feel himself at liberty to tell the master what he thought of him and the queer people he was bringing to Dromacurrig,—visitors, a sort of company his sister was never used to. It took half the countryside to keep him from sending back the horse; it broke a leg soon after, and Denis, they say, grinned a smile when he lifted the gun to put it out of pain.

Well, we were clustered about the trap, and the master had his hand on the shaft of it when Robby brought Starlight swinging round the corner in a way that would raise the heart in you. He lifted himself up in the saddle to see us all there, master as well as the rest, to meet him; the poor boy's mouth was laughing, and we saw his white teeth shining. "*He* hasn't heard the news yet," the master said, bitterly.

The boy didn't hear him; all the same, he saw that something was after going wrong, for none of us spoke a word of welcome or anything, nor raised a hand. I think the master would surely do so if the sight of Denis's trap had not put him out. 'Twas Denis he was thinking of, his sharp bony face, his close-cropped sandy hair, the thin weather-stained cheeks, the frost-bitten ears. He knew by the trap that he'd have to meet Denis in the house later on.

Horses are delicate, you know. You'd think that Starlight too knew that things were not all they should be. She was nervous, wheeling and snorting, arching her neck, tossing and champing. The boy was trying to hear what one of the jockeys was whispering up to him; and once or twice Starlight nearly flung him over her head. At last he understood. He twisted the horse about with a strong wrist, touched his cap, and said: "I'm sorry for your trouble, sir."

The master nodded three or four times in a dull sort of way. Whatever was the matter with Starlight, she flung out wild, backing, and twisting, and shaking herself, and all of a sudden she went up in the air, her forefeet battling above our heads. "Stop it! Stop it! Stop it!" the master cried out all at once, as dark as thunder. 'Twas to the horse he said it. But again she went dancing on the road, scattering us. And again she went up in the air. The master snatched the whip from the trap and brought the lash down with all his force on the hind quarters of the animal; once, twice, three times he brought it down as viciously as he could. "Stop it! Stop it! Stop it!" he yelled out every time he struck it, without any shame, and he springing about the road at the horse's heels. 'Twas getting rid of his anger he was. I then thought of crying out "Take it home, Rob," and the horse was off like a flash.

We then saw Denis Cashman, bare-headed, cold-looking, coming towards us. Maybe he thought 'twas his own stallion was in trouble until he saw Starlight rushing by. But the master didn't want to wait for him, I think he couldn't bear to wait for him. So he stepped off swiftly to meet him. He put out his hand to him:

"Forgive me. I'm excited. That animal excited me. It excited me. It maddened me. I cut it down. I lashed it. I'd kill it as soon as I'd look at it. What's one horse to me now above another? The flower of my meadowland is mown down—my meadowland is wasted. But you're

after seeing her. My slender lily, my poor wife. 'Tis a sad spectacle."

Denis Cashman was one without any nonsense in him. The wild mad look of the master confused him for a second or two. He glared at him and then said in a cold sort of way: " 'Tis no time to be excited."

To that the master answered:

" 'Tis not. That's true. 'Tis no time to be blazing out. But the animal maddened me. The way it showed off—there! there! There, in that spot; and that poor thing inside between the candles!"

And with that he covered his face with his arm. It made no difference. Denis Cashman answered—like stones falling in a well:

"What is done is done."

And he kept a glinty eye sideways on the master, challenging him you'd think. The master turned to me and said:

"We'll go on now, Jerry."

But mind you I had to catch him and put him in the right direction he was so bothered by the coldness of the other.

We made back into the field and although we did not turn around, for indeed we dared not turn around, we knew that Denis Cashman's eyes never left us till we were gone from his sight.

## III

Now, we hadn't the master long sitting in the middle of us when, in spite of his fine words, he was eating and drinking too. Coming on nightfall the women sent over to say that the neighbours were gathering in for the wake, and that maybe 'twas the master's place to receive them. The oldest of us went back with him to the house then. I needn't say the place was crowded—his people are more than a hundred years in the parish, and her people—God

only knows how many hundreds of years the Cashmans are in it—and of course there was plenty for all of us to do. We had to see that no one was neglected and that it wouldn't be in power of anyone to throw a bad word at Dromacurrig afterwards. I stayed there till 'twas half-past two; and of course I'd stay the night, only that my wife's father, he was over seventy at the time, could hold out no longer. When I saw that everything was right the two of us came away. My wife's father, he was a living saint. Even as we came across from the house, there he was with the beads hanging from his hand.

'Twas a calm night with the moon shining full in on us from the sea. The air was lovely and cool and fresh after the heat of the rooms and the steaming glasses and the babble of voices, some of the farmers and the fishermen rising a little tipsy and inclined to sing only for the people beside them holding them in talk of the times that were past and gone. And do you know the thought that came to me and we coming along in the silence—that my poor old father-in-law with his handsome face and his bald head bent down by reason of his devotion—that he put a crown on the night entirely. Never a word passed between us till we reached the foot of the steps, when he blessed himself with the cross. Where we lived was in the middle of the stables, indeed there was a row of them beneath us. 'Twas for safety myself and one or two others were living above the horses. And a flight of stone steps led up from the outside to the couple of rooms we had. 'Twas when we got to the top of the steps, where there was a great big flag, that the old man and myself turned to look out over the harbour admiring the wonder of the night and the peace that was over everything.

Then I lifted the latch and went in. I knew the rooms would be empty, herself and the boys and girls were all helping at the wake. No sooner were we in than the old man let himself down into an old arm-chair he always made his own of, and I went groping for some matches

on the mantlepiece. The moon was shining across the floor. I thought I heard something stirring out in the yard at the back. I stepped over to the window and looked out. The white-washed walls of the sheds and the tarred roofs of the stables and the polished cobble stones of the passages, they were all lit up with the brightness of the moon. I looked and I heard the sounds again, and when I looked better 'twas what I saw—the master himself and he crouched down and he fumbling at the lock of Starlight's stable! I remembered then that just before we left the wake someone said the master had broken down entirely, and had to go up to his room. Starlight's stable was the room he made for when the course was clear! He was vexed, it seemed; he was jabbering, and his voice would rise and fall in the dint of his anger. I was petrified watching him there. The patient old man kept still for some time, then he said:

"What are you doing?"

"Be quiet," I said.

Of course he was puzzled then. He said:

"The candle, why aren't you lighting it?"

"Be quiet," I said again. "Sit there."

He saw that I had some reason for being severe with him. He sat still, his two hands flat on his knees.

But then he too heard the bits of speech coming up from the yard, and he could not contain himself:

"What's happening out there? Who's there at all?"

It failed the master to open the stable door. Maybe he hadn't the right key at all. He gave it up, he moved aside to the air hole: there were laths across it. He put his hand through the laths, far as 'twould go. And whether Starlight came over to the hand or didn't come, a great change came into the master's jabbering. "Oh, Ooh! Ooh!" he was saying like you'd pet a child of yours. And he was after forgetting the anger he was in. He called the animal his flower of the meadowland, and his star of victory, and every single thing he was after saying already about

his dead lady! And mind you, 'twas a very different voice he had; you'd think 'twas a different man was there. There was music in his throat this time, I tell you, full of satisfaction and comfort. 'Twas that that set me on fire altogether—the same words to be sounding so different! I got red and angry. I drew away from the window. I couldn't help myself saying: "Terrible, terrible." I had forgotten about the old man. As old as he was he stood up.

"What's terrible? Who's abroad? Who's outside?"

I didn't answer him. I could only stride down the length of the room and back again.

"Is that the master's voice?" he said this time, because the daft creature outside was getting reckless, maybe he was after forgetting where he was or maybe the horse had come to his hand. I couldn't help saying:

"'Tis."

"Who is he talking to?"

I made him no answer, I stood still in the middle of the room with no idea what was the right thing for me to do. But the master was growing careless of everything now. Louder and louder he gave out what was in him, and over and over again, just as he was doing in the evening. The old man suddenly straightened himself up:

"Is he saying—Slender lily flower?"

"He is."

"Is he saying: Star of Victory?"

"He is," I said, "stop now."

But he couldn't stop, and I wanting to think what was the right thing to do. He blazed out indignantly:

"Why them's the words Timsy Gallagher told me he was saying about the lady is dead!"

That surprised me, and it frightened me, too, for I was thinking he could find no meaning in what the master was saying, that he would think the foolish gabble of a tipsy man. Just then I heard Starlight whinny and clatter in the stall, and the noise somehow instructed me what to do.

I caught a chair and I drew it along the floor heavily, so that he'd be warned someone was after coming into my house. Sure enough he heard the noise. He started, and then I saw him bend down and scramble along the walls guilty-like, disgracefully. He got off through the wicket.

I turned to my old father-in-law:

"What's after happening, don't mention it to a soul."

As if my words didn't matter at all he said:

"Is he a Christian man at all?"

"Christian or no Christian," I said, "don't mention it to a living soul. There was nobody heard him but ourselves."

But there was, although to this day I couldn't say who. Because after his wife was buried, little by little it went about that the master had been fondling the horse and saying those things to it while his wife lay still above the ground. One morning he was no longer to be found.

Here the old story-teller stopped up; but I wanted to hear more.

"And was he dead?"

"No."

"And did he come back?"

"No."

"And why not?"

"Because, because those who met him in foreign parts many years after have this to say of him: that the marks of Denis Cashman's horsewhip are to be seen to this day on his neck and cheeks, and will be there for ever. So how could he come back? I needn't tell you the place went to wrack and ruin: 'tis little the lawyers could do to keep such a business on its feet and the owner of it abroad spending his substance in all the cities of France and Spain."

# THE SMILING FACES[1]

*By* BRINSLEY MACNAMARA

From *The Dublin Magazine*

## I

There were so many, in her time, who had come and sat in the same way in her bar that, for perhaps too long, Miss Cunningham was disinclined to regard too seriously the case of Thomas Weldon. It could not possibly be that he had his eye on herself, for, although she was a well-to-do woman with this nice, thriving business, and two lovely farms, as well, on the outskirts of the village of Clunnen, no one ever thought that way of her now. . . . These possessions might easily have built up a certain sense of allurement about her in the far-back past, but now she was old and quiet in herself, maintaining her grip upon life only, it would seem, by her constant and cautious attention of her business. It was the very reason, in a way, why she had come to notice particularly the case of Thomas Weldon, as she moved about her establishment continuously, talking to her customers, humouring them, concerned about them, even when it came to giving advice that might be a bit against herself sometimes.

Thomas Weldon had grown upon her of late, for he seemed to be always and ever sitting there by her counter now, talking to herself and Essie Kelch, her barmaid. If she had ever had any notion of marrying herself, Thomas Weldon might easily have been the sort of man she would have chosen. But the idea of her ever marrying! Oh,

[1] Copyright, 1929, by Brinsley MacNamara.

not at all! Never! Yet he was a nice man still, a real settled sort of a man anyway until this, until he had begun to come here so often, for no other purpose, as it had suddenly appeared to her, than to talk the few timid words he customarily spoke to Essie Kelch while in her presence. Essie Kelch indeed! A good attentive little girl who brought a nice bit of custom here of an evening by her pleasant little way, but the idea of marrying Essie Kelch! The cheek of these young ones nowadays anyway! But she had spoken to her, quietly, which was her habit, yet with the right kind of meaning behind her words:

"I suppose he does be even trying to flirt with you, when there's no one else here, and I'M not in the bar?"

"Oh, not at all, Miss Cunningham. Is it a man like him? Why, I'm sure he never even once thought of the like in his whole life."

She had watched most carefully after that, and had noticed several times how the quiet eyes of Thomas Weldon had strayed from her in eagerness, often while she was in the very middle of some of her most entertaining accounts of the secret histories of County Meath families, and became entangled in that curious net-work of a smile which would always seem to be gathered over the smiling face of Essie. . . .

Ah, how well she had guessed?

If it had ever gone further than that, she firmly resolved that such occasions should not so easily present themselves for the future.

## II

"But sure you all say that," said Essie.

"Who all? I never said it before, so I didn't," said Thomas Weldon, in his halting heavy way, yet pleadingly.

"But the lads from Castleconnor and Mullaghowen and Garradrimna! Oh, many and many's the time I've heard it."

"And you used to be talking to all them lads like to me?"

"I used, what else?"

"D'ye tell me now?"

"D'ye think I'm eight years here and never spoke to a boy in my life? And they in and out here every second in the day . . . "

A snatch of conversation like this would fall between them in the infrequent intervals between the appearance and the disappearance of customers, and if Miss Cunningham chanced to be out of the bar for as long as a few seconds, and with this he had to be satisfied.

The end of the night that had held for him just such a little bit of magic would be the lonesome road home past the ruined archway at Clonarney, that was called "Smiling Bess," and which in other days he had not had the courage to pass on really dark nights, but he did not care now. . . . He could feel brave and forceful now. After the Road of the Elms there was the long boreen down to the neat house in his comfortable nest of fields. He could feel the softness of his rich land about him as he went into the lonely house and lit the candle. A woman would be lovely here . . . Essie Kelch for instance, would be lovely here. . . .

And so he would sit lonely with his thoughts until the night was nearly done and the dawn had come. But sure not one of Weldons had ever married like this. Indeed, in his own very family down all the years he had been waiting for his sisters to be settled, he had heard the word mentioned, heard them say of some wayward girl: "Well, bad luck to her smiling face anyway, and see how she got round him in the heel of the hunt!" His own sisters had not been like that at all, but quiet, settled girls, even before they were properly settled, and so he had had to wait for what appeared a great length of time until they were off his hands, and it was this waiting, more than anything else, that had made him so timid, speaking no word to any girl, thinking of no girl until now. . . . Only what would his sisters say, his severe and sedate and comfortably married sisters say

to a "one" like that, a barmaid? Even long dead Weldons would turn in their graves. What good would she be for the wife of a farmer with the light ways in her after she being grinning across the counter at men all her life? Wouldn't anyone, living or dead, think he was mad entirely? They would, oh, they would! Begad, there was no use in making an eeget of a fellow's self altogether . . .

But in the fields a few hours later, the smiling face of Essie would. . . . Essie would seem to call him. The Weldons had ever been good farmers. They had brought these fields, these fields of his, to beauty, to lovely smiles on summer days with which he had enriched his soul till now, till SHE had come, with her face before him always now, coming between him and the face of the fields. And all the tenderness he had aforetime given to the land. Ah, where was it now? Yet there was "something" all about him, in the trees and the quickening clay, in the wide stretch of the windy sky and over all the world. But soon a brightness that was its own shadow would have fallen for him upon the day, and he would be feeling that he must clean himself and hurry early into Clunnen this evening. . . . And it always took him such a long time now, the cultivation of his appearance. . . . In a way, it was harder work than when he had devoted himself to the land. . . .

## III

"I don't like the way that poor man is goin' on at all. Setting his land on the 'eleven months system,' and letting his bit of oats rot with neglect, like the way he did last year."

Miss Cunningham was saying this to Essie now more than a year after she had first "noticed it."

"Oh, sure he's getting to be a rale ould eeget anyway. I don't know what's come over him. . . . If only he would say what seems to be in his mind itself. . . . But sitting there with his elbows on his knees always and he thinking and brooding to himself. . . ."

"You shouldn't be taking much notice of him anyway."

"I won't, Miss Cunningham, and that's as sure as you're there."

After such a word out of Miss Cunningham's continuous and concerned mood of advice, Essie always tried to be as "cold" as she could, by keeping her face as much averted as possible when speaking to Thomas Weldon.

Ah, why was she doing that, he would think. If only she knew. . . . If only she could feel the sadness and then the fire that came into him whenever he heard her talking and laughing and skitting with lads from Castleconnor in the little sitting-room off the bar whither she had carried their drinks on a tray, and where he could not see her or them. And often he had heard her giggling richly in there. Oh, it was tearing him to pieces . . . murdering him!

That summer saw the almost complete neglect of his farm. But Miss Cunningham could do nothing to stop it. He was quiet and harmless, never raising his voice in her house, never getting drunk, only safely, moodily, and with not a word out of him, his eyes quietly in pursuit of the laughing eyes of Essie. Oh, but he was going from bad to worse. It was said that he had his nice little place mortgaged up to the hilt. He had become neglectful, even of his appearance, and, seeing him now, one would nearly laugh outright at the idea of connecting his name with that of little, laughing Essie.

He moved more moodily through Autumn evenings, often feeling, as he passed by "Smiling Bess," that there could be a great cruelty, surely, in smiling faces, that maybe Essie, when she laughed in the bar, or in the sitting-room now, was maybe only laughing at him. . . . What was it brought him such a feeling as he passed the sinister archway at Clonarney? The woman's head, so fantastically ornamented like the head of a Gorgoneion; what could it mean to him? Yet he could never pass it now without feeling some dread. . . . And still, strangely, on his homeward way, he would often return the road to repass it. Why was the

thing doing this to him, with its smile like that of one who had led men to their doom in the days gone by?

One night that was darker than usual, and upon the occasion of such a return along the road to Clunnen, he stopped to search for the face of "Smiling Bess" through the gloom. This night, beyond all others, she had called him! And for what? He could scarcely see her. But, beyond the stillness of his troubled mind, he heard the sound of suppressed laughter from one side of the archway. He could just barely see a confused group, but he knew what it was—a man with a girl in his arms. . . . Suddenly they seemed to have become aware of his presence. There was no sound at all. Above, the smiling face of Gorgoneion grinned on. It was Essie in someone's arms! He could see their bicycles leaning against the other side of the archway. Oh, aye, it was one of the Castleconnor lads. . . . To think that he had let this happen!

And there, in that moment, the resolve to which, heretofore, he had been unable to summon himself was born. . . . He could not let it go over him another single day. He would tell her to-morrow. She did not know, the poor, little thing, that she had nearly ruined him. Surely she must have guessed that the only "love" conversation he had ever had with her was a proposal. But she had not seen. He had "axed" her in his queer, timid way, and she had only shown by her conduct that she refused him—for the time being. But to-morrow he would tell her! He would tell her to-morrow. The long spell of his quietness would be broken, and she would know then how much . . . how terrible big was his love for her. He would carry her home to his little, neglected place in the fields, and all would be beautiful again . . . her smiling face . . . the smiling face of the fields. But above him now, monstrous through the darkness, the face of "Smiling Bess." . . . He hurried away, that face in his eyes, and in his ears what he took to be the sound of laughter. . . .

## IV

The next morning he heard, the postman, or someone passing early out of Clunnen, had told him, that Miss Cunningham had passed peaceably away in the night-time. Ah, that was sad, the poor old thing!

He went into Clunnen, as he had purposed, only to find, in the natural course, that "Miss Cunningham's" was closed and shuttered. And for three days, until the funeral, he went into Clunnen, but never into one of the other houses. They might say what they liked of him! They would know now that he was no drunkard, but only one with lovely feelings always.

He saw Essie at the funeral, in a little black hat that suited her, crying over Miss Cunningham's grave. And he cried too. A nice woman, Miss Cunningham! She had never said a word to him, although he must have been more or less disgusting to her, sitting there, day in, day out. And he felt this of her now, although she had prevented him from "axing" Essie properly. . . . But to think that he must wait longer, now that he had at last made up his mind. . . . But he waited, waited in patience, his great resolve still further exciting him until the shop opened again, and, in the temporary employment of the executors of the late Miss Cunningham, Essie appeared as usual in the bar.

He was again standing looking at her, saying polite and sympathetic things about the departed. . . . But the words were rushing upon him now, after the silent years. . . . When would she give up speaking about the virtues of Miss Cunningham, so that he might decently tell her? . . . But, even still, she was saying things that he had not the heart to interrupt, the kindliest things about Miss Cunningham.

He had not spoken to a soul since her death, so immersed had he been in his tremendous resolve. He had not heard the rumour that, as a reward for her faithful services, Miss Cunningham had willed Essie the house and the two farms, and a considerable sum of money. But even if he had

heard of it, the full significance of such news might not have dawned on him.

At long last, when Essie began to speak of other things, he had the opportunity. And the words burst from him, a long-pent-up stream. . . . He scarcely knew what he said, but he asked her surely to marry him and over and over again. . . . He said all the lovely things to her that he had wanted to say for so long.

"How well you never came to ask me until now?" she said. "Think of all the years I have spent here slaving, when I'd have loved to get out of it and be mistress of my own place. And you spent and spent, wasting and wasting, coming in here. And now to think that you have the cheek to ask me when you have everything spent, and when you know well that I'm coming in for this place and the two farms, and any amount of money. . . !"

His very face looked speechless as he stared at her bewildered:

"Ah, no, I never heard, not a word, I never heard, not a single word, and that's as sure as you're there."

"Ah, you never heard? Do you think I'll believe that for a story? And isn't that why you're asking me now, and for no other reason at all?"

"Ah, no, it isn't. It isn't surely."

And then he spoke of it no more. . . . There was a great quietness upon his mind, quiet like of old, before he had begun to come here. Let her think of him what she liked. Her words were hard, and she did not understand. He felt now that she might never be able to understand. . . . So where was the use? He was trembling as he stood there by his drink at the counter. . . . She was not the same girl now. Oh, no, nor never again. . . .

"Don't you know well I'm engaged to that Castleconnor lad anyway?"

He knew now, of course, and then he did not seem to want to know, for he remained dead silent. He seemed to remain a long time there imprisoned in himself, until he was roused

by hearing, from beyond what seemed a great distance, Essie laughing in the sitting-room. . . . It was the very same as the laughter he had heard by the archway of "Smiling Bess." The Castleconnor lad was in there with her now, and they were going to be married. . . .

He was already in the moment of his second great resolve . . . Ah, yes. It was the thing should be done, the right thing now. He moved towards the door of the room, surprised the while how easy it was to do this thing now. . . .

"Excuse me," he said, walking right in and surprising Essie upon the young man's knee, "but I was going home, and it's how I didn't like to go without wishing yous a great dale of joy. . . ."

He did not know whether he had shaken hands with the young man or not, or how he had left the house, for already he was out of the house and far down the road. It did not seem so hard to pass the face of "Smiling Bess" now, for it seemed that it might be a long time before he should pass it in day-time or dark again. He was going like some truant lover towards his own fields again. But would they understand? Maybe they would understand. The dumbness that had been upon him, and the waiting and waiting, until he had lost. He would be always telling them of that now until maybe they would smile again.

This, surely was, his third and more certain resolve—to make them smile again. . . .

But he had wasted himself and them. He was not the man he had been, nor were they the fields the Weldons had left him.

. . . Make them smile again. . . . If they broke into laughter at him altogether, what kind of laughter would it be?

That would be his life now, he thought, to prevent this from coming. He must hold himself and give himself to that battle. The people would laugh at him, maybe, but the fields . . . Ah, no, they could never have the heart to do it. But he had thought the same way once of Essie. . . . And

yet . . . and yet, because of her, the fields were lovelier and kindlier than ever before.

It was her face still that he saw in them, and maybe she would never . . . never laugh at him again.

And so "Smiling Bess" could hold no terror for him any more.

# LAI JOHN [1]

*By* ALFRED H. MENDES *and* ALGERNON WHARTON

From *The London Mercury*

They called him Lai John. It was not wholly his name, but it was good enough; for what could a Venezuelan or a nigger make of a name like Tuen? It was too much of a sneeze. He lay in the bows of the boat cuddling his knees. Cold and wet, he had never suspected that he would ever have left his kitchen to come out on such a tramp as this. His toes, chilled in the ooze at the bottom of the boat, were like ten little icicles, each an agony. Never since he had fled China for the promise of the West, not even in the bitter unsubstantial weeks that had quickly harassed him out of Canada, had his spirits sunk so low. Whatever had possessed him? He put the question to himself in his own oriental fashion; but there was not an answer. He had already considered a variety of ways of keeping warm, but in vain; and each movement was a madness in which the rain beat relentlessly upon him, numbing some new spot hitherto concealed. By now they had long passed beyond sight of land and there was only the black dripping sky overhead that rocked and rocked until his eyes grew dim and sick, and all about them the fussy hummocking seas that splashed him every now and then, so that he gulped great mouthfuls of sea-water.

He cursed himself, in a flow of half-audible, choppy words; and then, more emphatically, holding the pit of his stomach the while, he cursed Lucia—the cosmopolitan Lucia, with the black hair and yellow eyes. He cursed her for a full-lipped

[1] Copyright, 1929, by Alfred H. Mendes and Algernon Wharton.

slut, his black gape of a mouth terrible to see, reviling every part of her, until there remained but a skeleton of the beauty that had trapped him. But it took shape again, and flesh, and she hung above him in the wind, her yellow eyes gleaming, an agonising laugh on her lips; and his soft flattened little nose itched again at the vision of her firm round breasts, that in a happier moment he had compared to ripe oranges. He screwed up his slits of eyes at the memory of how she had approved of his simile, drooping a shoulder to him and pouting; though the metaphor had come readily enough and, as you might say, involuntarily, he being a cook. . . . It is true that he was not master of his kitchen, since a considerable part of his time was taken up peeling potatoes, washing the rice, or skinning shrimps; yet he was a first-class cook, as Lucia could attest. His curry alone betrayed his artistry; it had been indeed one of his early gifts to her—that first night of his scuttling off from work to her alley down-town. He had almost been himself prepared to doubt the age of the hen she had described so delightedly as "chicken." "It is so nice and soft," she had told him tenderly, her mouth running, and his display of tiny, mouse-like, blackened teeth had done scant justice to his ecstasy. He seemed, moreover, to better himself as he went on: he was so well repaid by her amusing attempts at using chopsticks that he contrived the most appetizing dishes with which he thought they might with the most difficulty be used. From curry, and chicken, and shrimps, it had been no difficult step to cakes—and here he was a master. Little corn-coloured puffs they were, with crushed peanuts sprinkled thick and brown, or almonds, just appetizingly burnt; then rice cakes, crisp, flaky little squares of puffed rice embedded in honey-coloured sugar that melted in the mouth. And from rice cakes (how she loved them!) it had been no difficult step to Lucia. . . .

The women he had known of his own race and station had been altogether too critical and knowing; they left him with no delusions. But Lucia had been different: she had the

knack of drawing his confidence by her appealing artlessness and childish delight. She had given him such power; she had made him feel such a man! With what busy swagger he would pass up the dark passage to their trysting place! But such a triumph had been too swift to last, and only this night his eternity had fallen about him in ruins. The bitterness was insupportable when he remembered the ease and eagerness with which she had led him, so unforgivably a lamb, to the night's abomination. He had taken her to the cinema—not that he specially understood the entertainment, but because it was a fine thing to do. Everybody went, it was true; but not everybody, and certainly not any of the Chinamen, had a girl on his arm: *they* trouped in as a rule like a flock of geese, gazing about them in blatant surprise. How unique had he been! With Lucia! and the touch of her hand in the darkness had never seemed so firm and strong, and yet so tender. Sitting in the hall, in a sticky ecstasy of some papelon she had brought him, he had been thrilled to feel how alone they seemed in the crowd. And when at last the unintelligible show was over and he had been obliged to inform her that they must part, he having to go on a "job," he recalled how she had clung to him, yielding herself up to a new fear.

"The police . . . ?" her soul seemed torn in terror.

But Lai John was game: "No get flighten," he had told her reassuringly, patting her arm, "Opium have plenty cash. Me get lot-a-money, and by-an-by me go countly open shop: you come too."

She had been inconsolable, wringing her hands, and must go with him through the gathering rain out of the town to where his boat would be. And then he remembered with horror the last kiss (her sweet warm breath was still in his nostrils) with which she had yielded him up to the two men under the trees. . . .

He sat up in a sudden fury in the boat, about to spit at her; but between them was the black expanse of sea, and between him and the sea was his stomach, and instead, he

merely gulped twice, as if the neck-band of his shirt would choke him, and the next moment was very sick indeed.

Till now no one had spoken. The boat lay some five miles to the south of the little islands that lined the northern extremity of the Gulf. Somewhere far in the southern distance was Icacos Point, impossible to see even in the best light, and between it and the coast the Serpent's Mouth, the narrow channel through which the sloop would come. The west was a black wall, and though there should by rights have been a moon, so thick was the night that even the lights of the town were discernible only as a pale glow towards the east. But every so often the powerful beam from the lighthouse on the cliff stabbed the storm, like a ribbon of liquid light. Drenched with rain and sweat, the other two men had lain on their oars for a space, and then, still without a word but in a cunning silence, Small, the black fisherman, took up his new position at the tiller in the stern, while José steadied the boat with the sculls. There was no light by which to see the men's faces, but Lai John's outrage could not be passed unnoticed, and Small's voice rose ironically above the wind:

"You belly belly sick, Lai John—good thing you didn't bring Lucia, eh?" And he spat in amused disgust over the gunwale.

José showed his appreciation of the joke by a broad grin that wrinkled his face like a baked apple. "Ah, Chinaman," he said sympathetically, "the waters is too strong for you; you ought to take to rum." And he stooped to feel for the bottle in the dark. Drawing the cork with his teeth he did not, however, pass the bottle to Lai John, but sucked at the sharp spirit noisily.

"After opium," drawled Small, reaching out to his friend, "rum's ditch water, no doubt." And the gesture with which he put the bottle down held every sort of hopelessness.

This play, though Dutch to the Chinaman, was perfectly understood by the two men; among the fine points of the game—ever since a couple of years ago, fishing along the

coast, they had decided that in their line two could work wonders where one might fail, and had sworn eternal friendship. There was money in fishing—well, enough to keep you going in the season anyway—but he was a poor fisherman whose only catch was fish; and if without the need for the baser and more laborious work they could, so to speak, take the flower at its bloom, one could not blame them. As it was, they had a double danger: from the real smugglers they could expect but little friendship; and the police—well, one was never sure: even Lucia, versatile, and triumphant on one or two occasions, could never be sure. But if, again, they seemed to snatch their winnings at the post effortlessly, it was not without considerable thought and that expert knowledge of every hole wherein stuff like opium could be stowed. They had them all charted in their minds: from Toco to Teteron Bay; and along the east and south coasts from Galera to Soldier Rock they had the eyes of a gull for "pickings." This labelled them deep-sea folk, and though it was not often they got a haul—that is, not much to speak of—yet they lived! About the workings of the harbour and town "depôts" they knew next to nothing. That was in the hands of the bigger people—the Chinese intermediaries, sloop captains, Mainland traders and the more successful merchants; and it was only when things were dull out to sea, as on this occasion, that they came up, country bumpkins at heart, to see the sights of town.

In the boat José rubbed his high cheek-bones thoughtfully, looking up at the sky in the East. "Soon be over now," he said, "—till it comes again."

The sky had indeed cleared, and the rain came in a drifting drizzle from drifting banks of cloud. Far across the water the lights of the shipping came out slowly, one by one. Astern lay the black masses of the Northern range, rising sheer out of deep valleys and decaying swamps, with here and there a faint light showing at the water's edge or high up on the hills. Over the bowl-like silhouette of a valley a dark purple pall of smoke marked a spent bush fire. Closer

at hand were the islands, rugged and rocky hills, one of them like a gigantic lizard with its long flat tail dwindling away in the wash of the sea. High overhead the clouds hid the moon, and one shapeless mass, fringed with a pale light, glided majestically before the storm, like a magic carpet. A flight of night birds, deftly skimming the water, swept by silently on quickened wings, like lost souls.

Small came to the business in hand: "What about that sloop?" he asked, leaning forward, elbows on knees.

Lai John turned bleary eyes to the west and back again, but said nothing.

"Well, here's the plan," Small went on, "When sloop he come, you go takee stuff from captain; you payee money quick; you sit down damn quiet. If you makee noise you dlink plenty more water." And then in more business-like tones: "Keep your eyes open and your mouth shut, and your stomach silent—see?"

"True," put in José in agreement; "if you going to be sick again get it over now and be done; there won't be no time later on, Yellowbelly!"

Lai John kept his eyes as wide as possible, which wasn't very wide, and his mouth shut tight; but his stomach—well, he begged all the dynasties to witness that over this he had no control. Small stuck his bare, fanshaped feet along the gunwale of the tossing boat with enviable ease and looked him up and down in the darkness, as if critically surveying his catch for the first time.

"H'm!" he said, "can you shoot?"

"Levolver?" asked the Chinaman, fearfully, "no, no, never."

"Levolver, yes, yes," came the encouragement, "at least if we've got to—unnerstan?" Then after a pause: "How much stuff's for you?"

"Bou-ten-poun'."

"But you lich man!—How much money?"

"One-hundled-ninety-tollar."

"Good. Well, we'll want a hundred and twenty dollars a

pound—sell it where you like, see?" And then he added as if in an afterthought: "Play square, now, and we, as is usual, will play square too. You can get a damn sight more money than that for it, but all we want is a hundred and twenty dollars—nett cash! So bring the dough over, like a good lil feller, and the stuff's yours—savvy?"

Lai John forced a grin, and Small cast his eyes about before he resumed his instructions: "But if," his voice was casual and almost friendly, "if you ain't square, d'you want to know what'll happen? I'll blow your blasted gold-filled stud clean through your neck; I'll rattle your teeth down your gullet, maybe, like peas in a pod; or stick some lead through your eyes, like a parcel in a pillar-box—all sorts of things could happen, in fact, to make you feel ashamed of yourself."

There was a silence, and now that they understood each other Small saw no need for further speech but patiently went over the night's work in his mind. He took his bearings: the boat had drifted before a running sea; a low peal of thunder ran along the southern floor of heaven like the gentle roll of a far away drum; the moon peeped for an instant from behind racing clouds, and he could see Lai John glistening beneath its light in the bows, a shiny black and yellow, like a cheap plaster doll. He smiled; and again at José at the engine, whose light merino and flour-bag trousers clung to him like a skin. He himself was fairly clad, in blue serge trousers and a heavy sweater, and this bodily comfort must have gone a long way to ease his mind. He tugged his begrimed felt hat more cosily over his face and let his eyes wander over the sea, sleepily. The visibility was sufficiently bad, but the sharp gusty rain, and salt and sweat, played the devil with his eyes. Yet he had to see for three! For Lai John, stiff with cold and seasickness and anxiety, had ceased showing any signs of life and lay with his thin little body curled like a bit of gut. José was a mechanic and a great sailor, but not a seaman. He could work all day at an oar or in the rigging, but was as unfitted for the responsi-

bility of the helm, for instance, as Lai John for anything more than a duck-pond. And this consciousness in Small swelled his pride. He had in his early days smuggled with the best of them, rum and cheap jewelry enough to set him up in business had he wished; but never before had there been such promise of gain, nor had things run so smoothly, and his joy for the moment was in the old sense of danger, the splendid trick, the sting of the sodden wind, the smell of the salt sea in his great wide nostrils—and his supreme command. Suddenly he strained forward:

"Better tune her up," he said presently. "Just keep her turning."

And as somewhere in the darkness José stooped to the order, a blinding lightning cracked the sky, and simultaneously, as if through the crack, peal upon pent up peal of thunder dropped out of heaven. In the flash a form, blunt and black, suddenly swung over their bows; but Small was as quick:

"Let 'er go—hard!" he roared, jamming down the tiller. There was a cry from Lai John that trailed away on the wind, and the swift splash of water, and the next moment they had all but stove their starboard bow. The motor boat rocked as her stern half buried itself in the wash, then steadied herself, running parallel with the sloop. José whistled low through his teeth. Lai John sat up stupidly staring down at the sea; Small's brows knitted a little, but now was not the time for Lai John. He turned to the sloop:

"What the devil're you doing?" he shouted, "Where're your lights?"

"None o' your business. What the hell d'you think I am—a floatin' hotel, or a Coney Island show, maybe?"

The voice was unmistakable to Lai John. He sprang up suddenly like a Jack-in-the-Box: "Him sloop, him sloop!" he cried gleefully, desirous to please.

Small's voice sang out again: "Throw a line."

"Not for hell!"

And now Lai John, with strange loyalty, and in a flow of explanatory cosmopolitan chatter, like a river in the rainy season, at last managed to come to terms with the sloop; and the next few moments the two vessels sheared apart.

Even with the wind drumming in their ears a strange, sweet stillness came over the three men. José let the engine hum easily along and reached out his hand to Lai John: "You've earned a drink: rum very good for bad stomach," he said genuinely. The bottle passed, and Small, about to raise it to his lips, kept it poised in the air, his ear cocked like a terrier's. "Hell!" he growled under his breath.

Faintly, just sufficiently to reach their ears, like the echo of their own engine, a low, flowing sound. The engine's roar and the boat's sudden leap testified to José's attention. Down the wind the little boat went. In the bows Lai John took a breaker, beautifully, and lay confused and gasping in a new terror. A sharp low command brought him to his senses; an unfamiliar and unwieldly revolver was thrust into his hands. Now Lai John was a cook, and no shot; and the cold touch of the steel burnt his numbed fingers; but the strong neat spirit still tingled in his gullet and beat upon his brain. Over the sea a dim form moved—towards them; imperceptibly, it gained; and he heard the short sharp blast of a whistle that was the sign of authority for them to stop. Yet he heard his boat's engine roar out a challenge to a chase, and felt the timbers strain and crack against the rushing water. He did not know about these things, but he felt that to dodge the patrol in the darkness was folly; it would be prolonging the night's agony, that should now have been at an end. They should never have tried to escape, but should have given themselves up. They had been caught squarely, and there was no chance, and six months' gaol would have been the worst of it; but now there was no telling how it would end, except that the moments were becoming more futile and fateful; and he cursed himself again, and again he cursed Lucia. Yet remembering now only himself and how he might best face it, he clasped convulsive

fingers over the revolver: here, perhaps, in his very hands, lay his defence. And at that very instant there was a flash and a sharp report, as the first admonitory shot was fired by the patrol; and before the others or he himself knew what had happened, he had answered—anyhow, anywhere, so long as his shot would put an end to his terror.

It was the beginning of the end, anyway: and from the pursuing launch came a hail of bullets, and from Small, roaring like a bull in the stern, a volley of curses. To return the police fire was but a waste of time and ammunition, yet Small himself was shooting rapidly. A quick thought passed through his mind: was there not yet a chance of escape, by silencing the men who had victimized him? What evidence of shooting could there be against him? Lucia. . . . Lucia would have her revenge, certainly; but she knew him only as a busy little cook whom she had tricked. Looking at it this way, Lucia might, indeed, be almost his best defence. Besides, the police, he reflected, not without irony, "shoot belly fine"! and some credit for their personal prowess would no doubt be claimed. . . . He raised his arm in obedience to a threat from the Venezuelan, and looking along the barrel he suddenly saw Small's vast form square before him. His mind jumped to action, and with the flash from his pistol the black bulk seemed to sag and droop and swing limp, sideways across the stern. There was a cry for his dead friend from José who was crouching up against the gunwale to leeward of the engine, and Lai John, inexperienced, but now thoroughly amok, steadied his arm for the third shot: and at the instant, José tumbled backwards out of the boat.

Just as a final hail of police bullets shattered the engine, Lai John dropped his revolver over the side and, cold and calculating, watched the little boat take fire. As the flames leapt up, casting crimson shadows in the boat, the only surviving occupant composed himself into a little knot in the bows, and awaited with an inwardly calm resignation and an expression of unrelieved nausea, the advent of authority.

# AFTER FOURTEEN YEARS[1]

*By* FRANK O'CONNOR

From *The Dublin Magazine*

Nicholas Coleman arrived in B—— on a fair day. The narrow streets were full of cattle that lurched and lounged dangerously as the drovers goaded them out of the way of passing cars. The air was charged with smells and dust and noise. Jobbers swung their sticks and shouted at one another across the street. Shopkeepers displayed their wares and haggled with customers on the high pavements. Around the monument of the Maid of Erin in the market-place shrill-voiced women sold apples, cigarettes and lemonade, while great burly farmers with shrewd ascetic faces under their black Spanish hats jostled him as they passed.

He was glad when he succeeded in getting his business done and could leave the town for a while. It unnerved him. Above the roofs one could see always the clear grey-green of a hill that rose sharply over the town and seemed as if at any moment it might fall and crush it. The sea road was better. There were carts on it too, and creels passed full of squealing animals; but at least one had the great bay with its many islands and its zone of hills through which sunlight and shadow circulated ceaselessly, without effort, like the flowing of water. The surface of the bay was very calm, and it seemed as if a rain of sunlight were pelting upon a bright flagstone, and being thrown back again in glittering spray, so that when one looked at it for long it dazzled the

[1] Copyright, 1929, by Frank O'Connor.

eye. Three or four fishing smacks, and a little railway steamer with a bright red funnel were all the life that the bay held.

He had his dinner over an old shop in the marketplace, though he ate little. The farmers and jobbers pressed him into conversation, but he had nothing to say; they talked of prices and crops, the Government and the County Council, about all of which he knew scarcely anything. Eventually they let him be.

After dinner he climbed the hill that led out of the town. The traffic had grown less; he climbed, and as the town sank back against the growing circle of the bay it seemed a quiet place enough; too quiet perhaps. He felt something like awe as he went up the trim gravel path to the convent. "At seven," he thought, "the train will take me back to the city. I shall never see this place again, never!"

But his heart beat faster when the lay sister showed him into the bare parlour, with its crucifix, its polished floor, its wide-open windows that let in a current of cool air.

At last she came; a slim figure in black, with starched white facings; he scarcely looked at her, but took her hand, embarrassed and silent. She too was embarrassed.

They sat together on a garden seat from which he saw again the town and the bay, even more quiet now. He heard nothing of its noise but the screech of a train as it entered the station. Her eyes took it all in dispassionately, and now and again he glanced shyly up at her fine profile. That had not changed, and he wondered whether he had altered as little as she. Yet—there was a change! Her face had lost something, perhaps it was its intensity, both its roughness and its tenderness. She looked happier and stronger.

"And Kate?" she asked, "how is she?"

"Oh, Kate is very well. They have a nice house in Passage—you know that Tom has got a school in Passage. It is just over the river—the house, I mean; sometimes I go down to them on a Sunday evening. . . . They have five children now; the eldest is sixteen."

"Yes, of course—Marie! Why, she was called after me. She is my godchild."

"Yes, fancy, I had forgotten! . . . You used always be with Kate then."

"Marie has written to me on my feastday, ever since she was nine."

"Has she? I didn't know that. They don't talk to me about it."

A faint flush mounted her cheek, and they were silent for a moment.

"Kate writes to me off and on too—but you know Kate! It was from her I heard of your mother's death. . . . That must have been a terrible blow to you."

"Yes, it was very sudden. I was the only one with her when it came."

"We had Mass for her here. How did she die? Was she——?"

"She died hard."

"Oh!"

Her lips moved silently for a little.

"I have never forgotten her. She was so gentle, so—so unobtrusive, and Fair Hill used to be such a happy place then, before Kate married, when there were only the three of ourselves. . . . I used to come up there from the city after school. . . . And so the house is gone?"

"Yes, the house is gone."

"And Jennifer? The parrot?"

"Jennifer died long ago. She choked herself trying to eat an apple."

"And Jasper?"

"Jasper, too. An Alsatian killed him. I have another now, a sheepdog, a great lazy fellow. He has made friends with the Kerry Blue next door, and the Kerry Blue catches rabbits for him. He is fond of rabbits, but he is so big, so big and lazy!"

"You are in lodgings. Why didn't you go to live with

Kate and Tom? You know they would have been glad to have put you up."

"Why should I? They were married; they had children at the time; they needed the house for themselves. . . . Besides, you know what I am. I'm a simple fellow; I'm not a bit clever; I don't read books. What would Tom and his friends from the University have thought of me?"

"No, you used to spend all your time in the country. I remember you getting up at five and going out with the dogs, around White's Cross and back by Ballyvolane. Do you still do that?"

"Yes, every fine morning and most Sundays. But I had to give up the birds when mother died."

"Ah, yes! The birds! I remember them too, and how beautifully they sang." She laughed quietly. "The other girls envied me so much because of the birds' eggs you used to give me, and I swapped them for other things and came back to you pretending I had lost them or that they had been broken. . . . Ah well! And you are still in the factory."

"Still in the factory! . . . You were right, you see. Do you remember you said I would stick there till I died? You used to be angry with me then, and I would give a spurt and. . . . No. I never had any ambition—not much anyway, and as well be there as any place else. . . . And now I am so used to it that I couldn't leave it if I wanted to. I live so quietly that even coming here has been too much of an adventure for me. I shall be glad to get home."

"Yes, I can understand that."

"Can you? You used to be different."

"Yes, but things are different here. One works. One doesn't think. One doesn't want to think. I used to lie abed until ten at one time; now I am up at half-past five every morning. I am kept busy all day. I sleep sound. I don't dream. And I hate anything that comes to disturb the routine. I hate being ill, being in bed, listening to the others and not working."

"And you don't get into panics any longer? You don't weep? You are not ambitious any longer?—that is strange. . . . Yes, it is good to have one's life settled, to fear nothing and hope for nothing."

"Do you still go to early Mass?"

"Yes, just as before."

They fell into silence again. A little mist was rising from the town; one side of the bay was flanked with gold; a cool wind from the sea blew up to them, stirring the thick foliage and tossing her light black veil. She rose.

"What are your lodgings like?" she asked, her cheeks reddening. "I hope you look after yourself and that they feed you properly. You used to be so careless."

"Oh, yes, yes . . . And you—how do you find the climate here? Better than the city?"

"Oh, of course," she answered wearily, "it is milder here."

They paced silently up the path to the convent, and parted as they had met, awkwardly, almost without looking at one another. He felt that within herself she was trying desperately, with anguish, to formulate his name and speak it without emotion, even as he was trying to formulate hers.

"No," he thought, as he passed through the convent gate, "that is over!" But he knew that for days, perhaps for months, birds and dogs, flowers, his early-morning walks through the country, the trees in summer, all these things that had given him pleasure would give him nothing but pain. The farmers coming from the fair, shouting to one another forward and behind from their lumbering carts, brought to his mind his dreams of yesterday, and he grieved that God had created men without the innocence of natural things, had created them subtle and capricious, with memories in which the past existed like a statue, perfect and unapproachable.

And as the train carried him back to the city the clangour of its iron wheels that said "ruthutta ruthutta ruthutta" dissolved into a bright mist of conversation in which he could distinctly hear a woman's voice, but the voice said nothing;

it was like memory, perfect and unapproachable; and his mind was weighed down by an infinite melancholy that merged with the melancholy of the dark countryside through which he passed—a countryside of lonely steelbright pools that were islanded among the silhouettes of hills and trees.

And the train took him ever farther and farther away, and said with its metallic voice:——

"Ruthutta, ruthutta ruthutta!"

# FUGUE [1]

## *By* SEÁN O. FAOLÁIN

From *The Hound and Horn*

The clouds lifted slowly from the ridge of the mountains and the dawn-rim appeared. As I stooped low to peer over the frame of the little attic-window I whispered to Rory that it was pitch-dark; and indeed it was far darker than the night before when we had the full moon in the sky. Rory leaned up on one elbow in bed, and asked me if I could hear anything from beyond the river.

The damp of the dawn was everywhere that I might look. It softened the lime gable of the outhouse beneath me, it hung over the sodden hay in the barn and like the fog and mist last night under the blazing moon, it floated over the rumbling river to my right. I could imagine the flow taking strange courses in its flood, swishing in this neither dawn nor day nor dark, through all the alders and the reeds and the rushes and, doubtless, covering the steppingstones that we hoped would give us an escape to the mountains beyond.

So I whispered to Rory that I could only hear the water falling in the weirs, and tumbling out of his bed he cried a curse from Christ on the whore of a river that was holding us here to be plugged by the Tans for a pair of Irish bitches.

As I peered, standing in bare feet on the timber floor I recalled last night with a shudder. We were retreating from Inchigeela by the back-roads and we two had lost ourselves in the barren and rocky place they call the Rough, a difficult place by day and almost impassable by night. We had

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tramped up and down and up and down until I felt my eyes closing as I stumbled along, and scarcely had the energy to push back my bandolier when it came sliding around my elbows. Rory, a country fellow, seemed tireless, but my shirt clung to my back with cold sweat. The fog lay like a white quilt under the moon, covering the countryside, and black shadows miles long and miles wide stretched across the land. Up and down we went, the fog growing thicker as we stumbled into boggy valleys, our feet squelching in the sodden turf, and fear hovering round our hearts. Earlier in the evening before the night fell, I had heard a noise before us in the lag, and had clicked a bullet in my rifle-breech and fallen flat, but Rory swore at me and asked me in amazement if I meant to fight them? After that I had no guts for anything but to get away from the danger of an encounter, to get across the river and the main road before the dawn, and up to the higher mountains on Ballyvourney beyond. So we trudged on and every natural night sound terrified us, a bird's cry, a barking dog with his double note, bark-bark, and then silence, bark-bark, and like that now and again the whole night long from one mountainside or another. People say the most lonely thing of all is the bark of a dog at night, but to us the most lonely sight was the odd twinkle of a light, miles away, one dot of light and all the rest of the land in darkness, except for the moon in the sky. The little light meant friends, a fireside, words of advice, comfort—but for us only the squelching and the trudging that seemed never to end, and maybe a bullet in the head before the dawn.

Once only we rested when Rory lost all patience and flung caution to the wind to light a cigarette in the hollow of his palms. I stretched out on the sodden moss—God, how restful to sleep there for an hour or two—but Rory muttered to himself and I tried to keep awake by watching the coming of the red glow in his palm every time he drew in a fresh puff. The moon was a few nights from full roundness and I thought it looked like a jolly wench laughing at us

both and the missing segment like a bonnety tam cocked on the side of her fat head. The devil would look after his own, Rory was saying, blast them, two again' twenty, we couldn't fight them. Rory pulled me up and we went on and I cursed Rory for not knowing the lay of his own countryside and he cursed me for a city snot that had no business out here in the mountains. Then we heard the cattle plunging in the boggy hollow beneath us, and we plunged ahead ourselves down a sharp descent where the river must have cut its way centuries ago: down we went sliding and running until the heavenly sight of trees broke against the sky and the dark mass of a house against them. Rory knew it for Dan Jamesy's house and we hammered with our rifle butts on the door, anxious only for sleep, and food, and the sight of friends. From an upper window she called to us and Rory spoke his name. Used to this sort of thing, and pitying us, she came down; barefooted, her black hair around her, a black cloak on her shoulders not altogether drawn over her pale breast, a candle blown madly by the wind slanting in her hand.

Rory had dressed himself while I peered out at the wall of mountain before me, and slinging his equipment over one shoulder he went down to eat something before we faced the river and the road—both half a mile away now. I followed him in a moment and found the old woman of the house and a little boy seated on the settle, his eyes wide with interest, hers full of uneasiness at our being in her house, a danger to her sons and husband. The young woman who had opened the door the night before stood like a statue before the wide fireplace, her bright arm bare to the elbow, and—curious gesture—her hand on the crown of her head as if to keep in position the hair brushed and close-combed around her skull like a black velvet cap shining in the firelight. She smiled at me as I entered, but I was too anxious to reply with more than a wan smile. Rory asked her many questions about the encircling troops, and she

replied, looking down at his ruddy earnest face, that some lorries had passed by an hour ago, and when he asked about the river she said that it had risen over the stones and could not be crossed. She stooped down to reach the teapot, keeping one hand on her hip as she poured the tea: before the hour was out I recollected how she looked at me while she poured me out a cupful, and at the recollection I felt just as when I saw the night before an odd, twinkling windowlight heading a deserted valley full of moonlight and mist. Stooping again she replaced the pot and went to sit on the other side of the little boy, and laying one hand on his knee spoke to him.

—That fir Tom brought last night has no fire in it.

—Tis a bad fire, God bless it.

—Get a good log, now, Jamesy will you? Will you?

The little fellow looked at us only, and said, I will, but he did not stir. The old woman broke in irritably,

—Wisha, Jamesy couldn't.

—Indeed, Jamesy is a great man, isn't he, Jamesy? Imagine Jamesy not to be able to carry a baulk of fir! Will you Jamesy?

But Jamesy sat with dangling legs watching us eat and she rose and with easy steps went out: the old woman stirred the wood fire; one of the sons handled my revolver with dull curiosity, and another fumbled in a ropeloft over Rory's head and replied that another lorry was gone by. We prepared for the river and the road, on our guard, not so afraid as when the night was all around. I went to the door to see if it rained, and stood looking into the dark archway of the stables and at the dark hollows under the thatch—nowhere else could I see the soft, silent fall. As I looked at the dark archway she appeared in it with an armful of logs and raised her head towards me and smiled once again and then approached pulling her blue apron over her head to protect her from the rain. I saw her smile and it tortured me. But Rory and the old man of the house came out and went

towards the stables, arguing about a horse to carry us over the flood, and I followed them, and we came at last to where the river was tearing madly over the drowned stones.

As I sat behind the old fellow on his white mare clasping him firmly about the waist, and trying to keep my eyes from the swirling water that tore the gravel from the unsteady hoofs, I saw from the corners of my eyes, the drops that splashed up and flashed in the sun as they fell again on the prancing knees and the brown water. I saw at the identical moment the young woman in the blowing wind of the night, and her looks at me twice, thrice that morning. I longed for an end to this vagabond life, longed for I dared not think what, but there was in it the scent and light of flowers and the scent of woman and her soft caresses. She had looked at me as if we had between us some secret love: not one woman in ten thousand will look so at one man in as many thousand, perhaps not one in all his life, never more than one I would have said a day ago, and now one such had looked at my eyes and I thought at once of the evening glow of the city streets when the sun has gone behind the tallest houses, when the end of the day is near, and the canyon-alleys are suffused with dusk and slow-moving lights: when men waken from the sleep of day and returning in upon themselves think of love, and the darkness where love is, and wander out from the city to the dark fields seeking a secret loneliness for their pain.

Rory had forgotten that he must not look down and he fell sidewise on the horse's back, and when he reached the opposite bank he began talking of his foolishness and never ceased reverting to it the whole day. He looked down, you see, he looked down into the flood, he forgot, man, he looked down, and by God, if he hadn't looked, but he looked into the water, he knew he shouldn't—wasn't it I myself was telling you not to look at the flood, but whatever happened I looked down. And Cripes! when I did . . . To stay him and have peace for my own thought I told him that he had but little talk the night before: but he did not heed my

jibes, and chattered on, glad of the morning and reckless about the last mile between us and the foothills. He was a little bellied fellow, his mouth like a crack across a potato, his cap distended by a cane hoop just like a plate on the top of his head. He had pinned a coloured miniature of the Virgin to the front of his queer cap, and when in the mood, his talk bubbled from him in anything but a virginal flow. How he had sworn at me yesterday when he sighted the enemy troops and I could not see at all the tiny khaki figures below us on the lower slopes!

—Do you see them, he had cried with equal stress on each word after the manner of his dialect. Christ, can't you see them, he had shouted in rage, saying it as if it were spelled in two syllables, Chi-rist. Will you look at them, Christ, will you look at them when I tell you?

I used to wonder at his affection for me in spite of such failures as this. In better mood now he jabbered on while we made our way up against the sprung wind and a hilly place. At last we heard the incessant knocking of a threshing engine on the bald summit in front of us, and we made our way to it. Up here the wind was a storm, and it blew the chaff about the sky like yellow snow blown before the wind. First the blue slate-roof, then the white walls of the house, the yellow stack of corn, the stone-wall fences of the fields, and at last the little black engine jumping like a kettle on the hob, while all the time the men swung their arms to and fro in labour: soon we were amongst them telling one group after another of the night's and day's adventures. Rory gabbled between every pant after his climb, telling about the horse and how I could not see the little grey figures when they came around us the evening before. From where we stood, the Rough looked like a flat plain and the distant mountains like hunchbacks in a row. I watched the whole country change with the shadows of the flying clouds, listening to the engine, with its disyllabic knocking, ceaseless since the dawn, and the wind's cry, and Rory shouting above all.

—There was the bloody mare in the middle of the river, I'm not in the habit of horses, you know, a man that was used to horses wouldn't mind, but I wasn't in the habit of them and I never was, and what did I do and the bloody mare there in the middle of the river, what did I do, what did I do? The thing I did! What should I *do* I ask you but look down at the flood, to look down at the flood I did. I looked down and only for the lad got a grip of me I was down. Cripes, I was. I was! If I would only not look down at the flood, you see, but I looked down, and by Christ!

Here Rory began to shake in his excitement, too moved to be articulate.

The chaff was always driving away before the wind, and now and again, someone would look up and around at the sky and say to the man whose stack was being threshed in this communal fashion of the mountains,

—Maybe, it will hold dry.

The other would look up and around and say,

—Maybe it will. It might then. It's a strong wind.

Then they would set to work again, piking and tossing the broken sheaves and we moved down at last to the road.

The road twisted eastward behind the rocks and nothing but the tops of the telegraph poles shewed where it ran after that. It was bare and empty, so we ran for it, crossed it, and in another moment Rory was crying that a lorry was coming around the bend. Heartleaping we doubled our pace and fell upon our bellies in the moss, squirming around like legless things to face the road. In a moment more the shots began to whine away over our heads, and I saw two awkward figures firing at us as they ran: I fired wildly in reply until my bolt jammed, and then rolled away into a hollow that by the fortunes of war lay behind me: thereupon I ran through the rocky place, through the bracken and the bog, more madly than ever in my life before, and raced for such a lengthy spell that when at last I fell helpless upon the ground my breath pumped in and out painfully and my heart beat against my side like a thing trying to leave my

body. I heard the shots still ringing and the bullets whining high up in the air, flying no doubt in a great parabola so that I fancied that I heard them thud when spent into the soft earth, a rainbow curve completed.

When at last they ceased and our hearts returned to a normal beat we were come to a little lowflung wood of birch and rowan, the silver bark peeling black stripes horizontally from the birch, the red berries of the rowan wind-blown on its delicate branches. Gray rocks covered the interstices of the trees and the sun fell sometimes on the rock to warm the cold colour: a stream twisted through the rough ground and its sound was soft and bass and up on a sudden promontory was a single figure silhouetted against the sky who was working in a series of vigorous thrusts on a spade. We remained in the little wood for many hours, listening to the bassviol of the falling water, to the wind pulling at the larch-tops and shaking the tender rowan, and sometimes listening with attention to the drumming of a lorry as it passed in and out of earshot in the near distance.

Excited by danger, and by the beauty of this calm place, the falling stream beside me, the trees moving all around, I began to think again of the young woman in the black cloak who had become aware that I too lived just as much as anyone she had hitherto known at church or fair. I saw her always as she had come to us in the night, her black cloak hanging heavily against her skin as she led us to the quiet kitchen and the dead embers on the hearth. Surely life had a less miser purpose in this encounter than in the thousand of thousands of meetings when men cross and recross in towns and country places? Time and again they had appeared barren and futile, but rather than believe them fruitless, rather than feel as a spool revolving in a shuttle, I had lived instead in the unrest of a chessman figured by a hesitant player. Now sloth of mind, as sometimes before, drew down my heart to the beauty of this life, and in this little birdless wood, I began to dream. When the stream had carved itself a majesty, passing barges and lights on the

barges would ride the brown smoke of the evening air, each crossing the scurrying wake of waves from swifter hulls to disappear slowly through the dusk while men sat on each deck and smoked in content with life, and recalled all the dead among my acquaintances who have suffered too willingly the futility of life. There is an owl in the Celtic fable who had seen each rowan as a seed upon a tree, and its length seven times fallen to the earth and seven times over raised in leaf; it had seen the men whose bones were washed from these boulders when the rain was rounding them to pebbles from seven hundred times their height this dropping evening; it had seen the men for whom the promontory above me was a bottomless valley and the hollow place where Rory and I sat was a high mountain before the flood. Such an owl called out of the dusk at me and its cry filled me with age and the peace that comes when we feel the wheels of the passing years turn so slowly that it is almost complete rest. I dozed as I lay—life stopped for me while my eyes swayed and fell.

But Rory, his mind whirling, sang of passionate life. He sang of the old Newgate murderer, the song found scrawled upon his Newgate cell after they hanged him and buried him: how eerie to see him ghosting like this in Ireland, his disjointed spine rattling and his single testicle aswing. Rory, not aware that before the night had fallen death would have got him, too,—his body plugged full of English lead,—sang cheerily:——

**My name is Samuel Hall, Samuel Hall,**
**My name is Samuel Hall, Samuel Hall.**
**My name is Samuel Hall,**
**Here's my curse upon you all,**
**God damn your eyes!**
**I killed a man 'tis said, so 'tis said,**
**I killed a man 'tis said, so 'tis said.**
**I hit him on the head,**
**With a bloody lump of lead,**
**And I laid the bugger dead,**
**God damn his eyes!**

I did not heed the words, but the sense, entering my mind, broke my drowsy dream in part. Looking up I saw the West grow cold and saffron as if the threshers of the morn, reduplicated in valley after valley, had blown a storm of corn-sheaves against the falling cape of night. A score of birds fulfilling their ancient ritual flew homeward in formation: as they passed into the blazing sun I dropped my eyes again to the stream, but while I had turned away it had changed to silver against the dark stones. Night was dropping upon us secretly and we must move onward to some house where we could sit before the flames and doze before a chimney-wall browned with soot and old invading rain and sleep quietly while the night passed by.

We tramped ahead, keeping to the backroads, still, but quite without fear now that we were so many miles from the enemy, and at last, high up among the hills, walking in the reaches of the wind we came to the little roadside house that was shop and postoffice in one, and we sat there wearily by the fire.

The land was cold and windswept here, and the few elms that stood outside, landmark for many miles around, were torn by the wind and being blown to pieces like the clouds in the sky. Rory was to stay here for the night, but I must move further on, and I sat by the fire waiting impatiently for the cart that was to carry me part of the last few miles to a supper and a safe bed. At the end of the kitchen the old carter was whispering across the little counter with the woman of the house; the young daughter of the house stood beside them lighting an oil-lamp that hung from a beam overhead, and presently the two grey pates were lit from above. The light fell in a warm glow on the unpainted counter, plain as when its planks first arrived from the town of Macroom twenty miles away and were flung on the kitchen floor for the admiration of the little fat woman with her little fat baby. The glow fell on the soiled and mutilated banknotes, on the silver and copper coins and on the blue sugar-bags and the dun surfaces of the remainder of Saturday

night's groceries. I waited while they talked in a secretive whisper, perhaps over the account, perhaps about their old-wives' gossip of the countryside. Perhaps they were wishing us wandering guerillas farther on and wishing the fighting at an end lest their barns be burnt over their hay or their thatch over their heads. Outside in the windy night the old horse was tethered to an elm, its head bent low and its eyes heavy with sleep like a Buddha's. Thinking of it I sat by the fire and raked in the ashes with the nozzle of my rifle. I felt it would rain heavily tonight though the wind was getting stronger, and once again I thought of the girl in the black cloak; but already she had slipped many miles into the things of the past, and in another day she would have slipped wholly from my mind not to be recalled unless in some odd place at some odd time when I would wonder about our strange encounter, and in sentimental mood wonder if she ever asked a comrade where I had gone, saying that I was a nice boy, perhaps more than that. She had stood at such a door as this in her mother's arms and would as her mother had done stand there again in one, two, three years time bidding farewell to the very last mocking couple of her bridal party, and looking at the sky with her young husband, see the coming of the rain and lock and latch the door upon it, and returning to the dying fire would hear the first drops fall on the warm core, and the rising howl strip the elms; he would draw her toward him and she, feeling her youth passed forever, would weep softly and secretly in the dark and then smile for her first ungirdling. What sad weavings the old weaver of life can think of, as if all will not fray away and moths rise from the eyes of his dears, and all his storms crumble at the end in dust.

I heard Rory chant some passage from a hedgeschool memory, and turning I saw the young girl of the house watching him, ready for a burst of laughter at the end.

—This, chanted Rory, is a man, the beauty of whose eloquence and the wisdom of whose conversation is balanced only by the impeccability of his character and the noble qual-

ities of the mind wherewith God has endowed him, for it is abundantly clear to me, continued the emperor in a graver tone, that wherever the original refulgence of the human mind is neither adumbrated in its infancy nor adulterated in its maturity, the unique powers of the will of man must inevitably produce in every individual, no matter in what clime he has been born, nor under what star he has first seen the light of day, if only he be true to what is right and turn from what is wrong, the genius of an Alexander, the oratory of a Cicero, the wisdom of a Solomon, or the sublime skill of a Leonardo da Vinci, as the case may befall.

The little bellied fellow finished with a breathless rush and turning to the girl clapped his hands and clapped her hands in applause at his own performance.

I found that this child was to accompany me a little way on the road and we snuggled into the back of the cart and sat shouting our farewells as it jolted away from the two yellow squares of light and from the figures crowding the open door. Then as we entered the spacious dark, silence fell on us three. I stretched back on the floor of the cart listening to the braggart storm. I felt young and wilful under its breath, I loved to hear its impotent whine: off behind the ridge of mountain through which a pass had been cut maybe five centuries ago by roadmakers rotted in the grave there came the great spreading light of the moon. We were following the direction of the racing clouds, they flying beyond us in the sky. My eyes were beginning to close with the rough swaying of the cart when suddenly the child clasping my hand said,

—Are you afraid of the pookas? I am!

And fell upon my breast and laid her head by mine and I put an arm around her and we lay so, jolting along under the stars and the driving fleeces overhead. But as suddenly, when about a mile had passed she pressed nearer and swiftly kissed me. Then she rolled away from me to the other side of the cart, though still grasping my coatsleeve in terror of the black night all around.

Presently I left them and the old cart was soon out of earshot. Jogging on through the dark, my thoughts wandered at will. I pictured the bed where I would sleep—I had slept in so many hundreds that it might be any size or shape, but I chose from my set of images one bed most suitable to the stormy night. It was the marriage bed of the peasants, made of plain wood, closed on back, side and top, and but only the front left open and that sometimes covered by a curtain on a string; it was like a beehive with a flat crown and sloping roofs, shallow at head and foot, so that a man could stand in comfort only in the middle of the bed. The storm might howl for all I cared, the rain might drench the stooks and fill the yards with pools of dung, the windows might rattle—I would sleep the night through and wake to find the skies clearing in the morning. I was hungry for food and sleep, and in this bed I would lie for a while thinking over the day's happenings, trying to find a scheme for things in the true dreamer's way, a scheme into which everyone would fit as by nature, the woman of the cloak, the little girl, myself, the dead husband, the carter, the crowds that meet and remeet, as it seemed aimlessly, blindly—and all these would jumble in my mind and quaint combinations occur and confuse me and my reasoning fall under the sway of interweaving images and sleep come secretly with her hood.

At last the bright square of windowlight slid into view, quartered by the crucifix framework, and I found the causeway to the door and groped my way to it after the window vanished in its own recess: I played blindman's buff with the door and at last with outstretched hands I stumbled against it and grasped the latch. Fireflames, a settle, and maybe a white cloth and something to eat other than dry bread and tea with goat's milk. I lifted the latch and looked in: a young woman stood with her back to me stiffened in a posture of surprise as when I first fumbled at the door, but relaxing and turning when I spoke, touched her soft hair

and bade me enter: it was the young woman of the morning.

—Is there 'ere a wake here? I asked seeing the lone kitchen, my voice trembling as I spoke.

—Devil a wake then! She was smiling at me again.

—Yeer very quiet then, I said, looking around at the clean-swept kitchen, and then at her skin like a boy's under its first, white down.

—Tis quiet wisha, she answered making way for me as I moved to the settle. I asked if there would be room for the night, and she said there would be and welcome.

—And a bit to eat for a hungry man?

—Surely, if you don't mind waiting for just a moment or two. I wanted to ask how she came before me to the hither side of the country twelve long miles away from her last night's hostel. I flung aside my bandolier and raincoat; I laid my rifle and pack and belt in a corner. She went to the end of the kitchen and I heard the splash of water and the paddling of hands, and when she returned to me by the fire, wiping her fingers, they were rosy when the apron fell. She halfknelt before the fire to blow it with a handbellows, and as she worked her body formed a single curve, one breast on one knee, and her arms circling the knee while she worked lustily at the bellows. I could see the little wrinkles at each corner of her lips—laughter wrinkles maybe?

—Are the old people in bed, I asked.

—Yes. Her voice trembled, I thought.

—And the rest? Where's the rest from you?

—There's nobody else. Tom, my brother, is on the run in Kerry.

I leaned back on the settle and the flames crackled into life.

—Well you must be very lonely here all alone.

—I have got used to it, she answered, patting her hair with the fingers of her hands: how soft it looked! Then she stood up and began to spread a white cloth on the white

table, and then to lay a milkjug, a cup and saucer, a sugar-basin, a pot of jam.

—Do you live here?

—Yes.

—But you're not always as desolate as this—surely?

—Desolate, just as you say; this is a lonely district, you know.

—Well it's not so bad at all now, said I. I shouldn't mind if I lived here—the mountains and the valleys . . .

She halted in her step and faced me: the little mouth was gathered into a hard, white button of flesh.

—You would soon tire of these mountains! The city, though, that's where I'd like to live. There's company there, and sport and educated people, and a chance to live whatever life you choose!

She had put two eggs into a little black pot of boiling water and the water bubbled and leaped around them with a hissing. A blast of wind came down the chimney and drove a cloud of firesmoke into the kitchen. We sat silent and presently went to the table and she poured me red tea to drink and I cut the brown loaf and plastered it with butter and jam, and ate greedily. She sat before the fire, and I asked her why she did not like the district, but she only looked at me and said nothing. I asked again, pleading that I wished to know, really and truly. She answered,

—Because this farm is bare and high. The land is poor. And this townland has a Northern aspect.

A heavy drop of rain fell on the fire,—the storm was howling. I saw the sea of discontent and unrest that these words were born of, saw the drizzling rain and no sun shining on it, saw her looks steal round her to this farm and to that and back from them to her own home. Another gust of wind blew the smoke around her and she turned away from it and clasped my knee to prevent herself from falling from the low stool.

—You'll be choked, said I, and her eyebrows stirred and she smiled at me. I laid my palm on her hand and thought of the whole lifelong day I had spent, the ricks that must be

threshed before the wind fell, the carter jogging through the wet night, the sea of darkness outside the door. How many days could I live without a complete revolt? I spoke earnestly,

—It's a cruel country to have to live in.

She spoke kindly to me then.

—I think you are honest, she said.

—Do you think that?

—I think you *are* honest. *Really* honest, she said again.

Looking at her soft eyes, and at her soft hair my eyes wandered down to the first shadows of her breasts: she caught my glance and looked down at her warm bosom and then at me and she smiled. As I moved to her I saw the little broken corner of her tooth; I had no word to say; so I sat beside her before the leaping flames and put my arms around her and felt in the cup of my hollow palm the firm casque of her breast. Smiling at me as a sick woman might smile upon a doctor who brought her her ease from pain she slipped my hand beneath her blouse to where I felt the warmth of her skin and her warm protruding nipple, and I leaned to her for a kiss.

A rush of feet came to the door and the little girl from the roadside house flung it wide with a cry to me to run, to run; Rory was shot dead; they were coming West for me! I bundled up my equipment, ran in a flash through the open door into the dark night, and raced on and on—stumbling and falling and going I cared not where but away from the flashing lights to the North. When I fell into a panting walk I was like a man who has been listening to music the livelong day and after it his mind is full of strange chords and ill-recollected they torture him with a sense of something lost. On my bare head the rain fell heavily and aslant, now and again it was blown into my face by the wind, and the clouds totally blotted out the moon. Full of terror for such a death as I knew Rory's was I filled every house with armed men, fierce men to whom killing was a little thing and torture but little more, and my imagination and the stories

I had heard drove me blindly on through the sodden night. I trudged a way through the pathless bogs and tore through briery dikes: all that night I found no shelter from the lashing rain and I met not a single tree in leaf: long after midnight I saw a little glinting window leap suddenly out of the dark about a mile away, and as I thrust away from it, away to safety, into the rain, the memory of its light tortured me as the memory of cool winds must torture the damned of hell.

At last I came upon a lonely ruin upon the mountain, three walls, and I lay on the lee side of it while the rain dripped on me from the remnants of its eaves. When I awoke a dim radiance lit the falling haze, but whether it was the dawn or the sinking moon or any hour past three or before three I could not say. No sound was to be heard: no living thing moved: no bird stirred the wet air: the falling haze made no sound. I rose chattering and trembling and my feet plashed through the wet earth and the drowned grass and when I halted there was quiet. I crossed a little stone wall and one of the stones fell with a mighty sound. I might have been the last human creature to crawl to the last summit of the world waiting until the deluge and the fortieth night of rain would strain him upwards on his toes while the water licked his stretched neck. Yet everywhere they slept sound abed, my dark woman curling her warm body beneath the bedclothes, the warmer for the wet fall without, thinking if she turned and heard the dripping eaves—that the winter was at last come.

**Cold till doom!**
**The storm has spread,**
**A river is each furrow on the slope,**
**Each ford is a full pool.**

**Each lake is a great tidal sea,**
**Each pool is a great lake,**
**Horses cannot cross the ford,**
**Nor two feet.**

The fish of Ireland are wandering,
There is no strand upon which the waves do not pound.
Not a town is in the land,
Not a bell, not a crane's whining cry.

The wolves in the wood of Cuan cannot rest,
They cannot sleep in their lair:
Even the little wren cannot shelter
In her tiny nest on the side of Lon.

Keen wind and cold ice
Have burst upon the little world of birds.
The blackbird cannot shelter its side
In the wood of Cuan.

Cosy was our pot upon the nook,
In the crazy hut on the slope of Lon:
The snow has crushed the wood,
And toilsome is the climb to Ben-bo.

The ancient bird of Glenn Rye
Is grieved by the cold wind:
Her misery and her pain are great,
The ice will get into her throat.

From flock and from down to rise
Were folly for thee! Take it to heart.
Ice heaped on every ford,
Wherefore I say "cold till doom."

Down below me in the valley I heard an early cart; the morning wind, light and bitter, sang occasionally in the key of the flooded streams. The dawn moved along the rim of the mountains and as I went down the hill the new day came up around me and life began once more its ancient, ceaseless gyre.

# MATED [1]

## *By* MARGARET O'LEARY

From *The Dial*

She went slowly across the farmyard, then up the fields where there was great space, and a long wide view over Cork Harbour. There was always a little breeze up there and a smell of the brine in it.

But this evening she did not notice any of these things; she was thinking deeply. She saw herself again a child, living in Gilabbey, over in the south side of the city of Cork. She was nearly always tired when she was a child, and she must have been ugly, because no one ever said she was pretty, or took notice of her, as people do of pretty children. She wasn't really unhappy—she was too tired for that—except on the days when there was a smell up out of the drains, a smell of cabbage water or sour suds; for these smells made her feel sick, even after she had gone to bed at night, and pulled the clothes up over her head, and tried to imagine the beautiful smells that would be on a grand lady's clothes.

She hardly ever missed a day from school. She didn't like school particularly—she didn't like anything very particularly—but when the class were saying the catechism all together, or spelling, or tables, she always amused herself imagining the nun with her veil off, and with the black dress and the big stiff guimpe off—dressed in beautiful satin, sometimes one colour, sometimes another, with beautiful golden hair down to her waist, and it all in curls. She made up pictures like that about the girls too, except those she knew

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well, but the pictures and the stories about the nun were best.

It was strange, now looking back, that they thought her clever at school. It was strange, too, that she passed her examinations, because anything she ever learned never meant much to her, and she forgot it all as soon as the examinations were over. And those two years at the teachers' training college in Dublin were just the same as her years at school, except that the rooms were better heated, and she liked that.

It seemed very, very long ago, that life, and yet, it was only six months. Six months ago she had never seen the daisies as she saw them here in the fields—alert, alive, sturdily nodding their heads. She had never known them at all. And here, the delight—to kneel down beside them, to lie flat on the ground, and let them touch one's cheek. How often she had done it! And then she would become filled with great tenderness for daisies, and all the things in the world, and tears would come to her eyes. The wonder of the world! The birds up in the air, singing mad, mad, mad! And alive, warm! The cows, big and happy, lying down in the fields, munching, and staring at her with mild brown eyes. Everything was like that here—happy and friendly and big. There was the nice warm farm kitchen, with its shining brass candlesticks up on the clevy, and its blue crockery on the dresser. And there was the old woman in the white muslin cap, who smiled at her with watery blue eyes, and called her "alanna" and who looked so comfortable, always sitting near the fire knitting grey stockings. And there was Ellen the servant-girl, with the untidy curly hair, who always wiped a chair for her lest she soil her dress; and Jimmy the milk-boy, who showed her how to dance the step-jig; and Paddy the servant-man, who was always asking her as a great joke in that loud jolly voice of his, if she was afraid of the hens; and Neilus the other servant-man, who never spoke to her, but showed his friendly feeling by deepening the two long wrinkles at the side of his big mouth, and bringing a flicker of light into his little piggish blue eyes.

How nice they all were! And they were all part of this new, strange, beautiful world into which she had come.

And then there was William!

She stopped short, and a sharp pain caught at her heart. The long stride of him when he was crossing the farmyard! His dancing black eyes, and white teeth! How he laughed the day she ran away from the calves when they were hurrying up to her, thinking she was Ellen with their food! And then, there was the day he saved her from the angry turkey-cock. How tender he was when he found she was really frightened! That started their friendship. All the things he used to tell her about the birds, and mating, and building nests! He was never tired of talking about them, and also about the seeds that take life in the dark earth, and then spring up into growing things. But it was the trees he loved best of all—the strong, manly trees, just like himself.

But now all was changed. William avoided her, and seemed to have taken a dislike to her. When the tea was ready, he always made some excuse not to take it, if she was there. Ellen had become surly, and often made loud remarks to the men about people thinking themselves ladies because they had come from the city. The servant-men too had changed. They had become silent, serious. But the old woman was still the same, with still the same warmth in her eyes and her voice.

But what had she done to William? Why was he avoiding her? He never looked at her. His dark face was always stern, and he seemed to be always worrying about his work, asking his mother if the calves were fed, and Paddy if the horses were brought in, in a tone as if he expected they weren't. But he never asked her anything. If he did, it wouldn't be so bad, because he would look at her, and if he looked at her—looked straight at her—a wonderful light would come into his eyes as it used to come, and he would forget what he was saying, and she would too, and they would just keep on looking at each other without saying anything.

If only she knew what was wrong, or what she had done!

Perhaps they didn't want her any more! Perhaps she was just an interloper, a child of the cities, a stranger in their midst, one who brought discomfort and discord into their lives! Well, she wouldn't like that, and happy as her life was there, she would go away—away very far, perhaps to America—but she would never, never forget her six months on the farm here, and all of them. Would they be lonely after her? What would they say? What would William say? Of course he would say nothing, but what would he think? Possibly that she was a poor little thing, well-meaning certainly, but useless and out of place, even as a guest in his home. And of course he would be right. She had always felt that herself. However, she would like to talk to him just once, only once, and for a few minutes, just to tell him—what did she want to tell him?—just that she had been very happy, and that she would never be unhappy again, even away out in America, because she herself had all changed during those six months, and she would never, never again be a dull dead girl—never, never, never—no matter what the future held for her. She was quite sure of that. Would William think of her when she was in America? Well, anyway, she would think of him.

She turned back to the house.

It was near tea-time. The old woman was half dozing near the fire, her knitting lying on the floor, and the cat playing with the ball of wool, in and out of the legs of the rush-bottomed low chair. The tables were laid for the evening meal, the big table under the window for the working-men and Ellen, and the small table near the fire for the old woman, William, and herself. Ellen was busy cutting bread and took no notice of her as she came in, so she went sadly over to the settle and sat down. The dog Gip came over to her and stuck his snout under her hand. She patted him gently, and then he went back again to the fire. From her seat she could see the three men come into the farmyard. They were leading horses. You could hear the even tread of the horses and the jingling of loose harness.

Paddy was the first to arrive, and his humming, and the bustling way he got the bucket of water to wash his hands outside the door, woke the old woman. She looked round with a puzzled stare in her eyes, and seeing only Nora sitting on the settle, remarked: "How quiet you are, child!"

Then Neilus came in, and then Jimmy. Ellen took control at the table, and poured strong tea into the basins from the big brown tea-pot.

They were all seated at the tables when William came in. He hung his black felt hat on the nail at the side of the dresser. Then he came over to his usual place between his mother and Nora, and sat down thoughtfully and with an air of depression. It was a silent meal altogether, except for the sound of spoons stirring in the cups, and the sound of eating and drinking at the big table. William kept staring at the fire as if he had forgotten where he was. His mother buttered the bread for him, and took the cream off the milk in the jug for his tea, but he took no notice of anything. She then asked him if he was sick, or had anything on his mind. He answered in a cross tone that he was all right. He then pulled himself together, and ate and drank with great gusto, as if he had suddenly become aware that he was hungry, and that satisfying one's hunger is the most important thing in the world.

When the meal was over he pushed back his chair noisily, got his hat, and went out. To feed the horses, very likely, and put them in their stables for the night, thought Nora. Why was he so queer and silent, so different from what he used to be, when joy seemed to be leaping out of him and on to each one of them, so that even slow-going Neilus warmed up? He was the sun of their little world, from whom they reflected light and shadow. Whatever was wrong with him had something to do with her, Nora. Well, she would follow him, and tell him that she would go away to America, and not trouble him any more.

It was a nice fresh evening with a touch of wind. The hens rushed at her from all corners of the big farmyard, but

she brought no bread this evening to amuse herself flinging crumbs. The horses were standing outside the stable door, solemn and patient, with the harness still on them. They were not fed. She peeped into the stables, but there was no one there. Then she went to the cow-shed, the pig-sty, the barn, the dairy, and even the hen-house. Paddy was crossing the yard with buckets of oats in his hands for the horses when she was coming out of the hen-house, and she blushed with shame and looked confused, for she felt certain that he knew she was looking for William.

He laughed in his loud way, and said to her, teasingly, "Ha! I caught you! Stealing eggs, ha?"

Then he laughed again as she grew more and more confused, and when he was a little way off, he called back over his shoulder, with bursts of laughter in between the phrases: "But you are a bad robber all the same. The morning's the time. How obliging you think they are! Come again in the morning. You might have more luck."

But where was William? She asked God to help her to find William, and hoped the Blessed Virgin would not think her bold and forward for running after William, but she must find him, she must, she must, even though he was running away from her.

She went on to the boreen leading from the farmyard to the road. It was beginning to get dusk and the boreen was shrouded with trees. A nervous, strained night it was, with a rising wind and quickly moving clouds overhead. Walking was too slow for her so she ran, her hand pressed tight against her breast. She had almost reached the gate, the white-washed pillars showed clear even in the dusk, when she saw him. He was leaning against the big pine-tree near the gate. His arms were folded and his face was turned towards the sky. She stood to look at him, but he did not seem to see her. She moved towards him timidly. His eyes were closed. She put her trembling hand on his arm and called, "William!"

He opened his eyes and looked down at her, dully, sorrow-

fully. She smiled at him, but there was no response in his face. She leaned against him and put her arms around him. He might have been stone. She stroked his cheek, his forehead, the eyebrows over his sorrowful eyes.

By degrees the tight mouth trembled. He raised his hand to hers, caught it gently, and pressed it against his cheek. She then lifted her other hand gently.

Words were coming to his lips, queer phrases that she only half understood, at first broken and without coherence, and then tumbling over each other in rapidity.

"Hell—hell and heaven—my first love—whistling to me—dancing together—my one love—laughing mad—red joy in my veins.

"The wind—the storm—the battering rain—mates—mates all.

"A pine on a windy hill, a hare on the mountain side, a wild stallion smelling the breeze—tamed—tamed and fettered—betrayed.

"The eagle will rest with the robin, the hare with the field-mouse, and the mountain pine will throw up the grand mad game with the storm, and will lie on the ground dead, tame, mating with the violet, the primrose—dead and done.

"Ha! What's that? Dead and done? Lying with the mouse and playing with the primroses? You would, would you?"

His eyes flashed with anger, and catching her two hands he pushed her roughly away. Then sinking on the ground, he covered his face with his hands and burst into tears.

She approached again, and watched his sob-shaken body for some time. Then, bending, she kissed his hair—that wonderful mane she had so often seen him fling up like a colt. His arms stole round her body, and by degrees his sobs ceased; then pulling her on to his knees, they remained for a long time, cheek against cheek, warm and still. He spoke but once, almost drowsily, "I could sleep for a thousand years after drinking in the perfume of your cheek."

She told him that they ought to go home, it was getting late.

When they stood up, he listened for a moment to the wind, and looking up at the swaying pine and racing dark clouds, said: "Easy, my girl, easy. 'Tisn't jealous you are, is it? My own wild beauty, sure there's no one like you. You were my one love, as long as I can remember. And I won't be false to you even now, for you will always stir me in your own way, and I will be one with you capering round the world, you beautiful mad thing."

Then throwing back his head, he burst into peals of laughter. She smiled at his hilarity without understanding it and when it was all over they walked home silently, a few feet apart, as if they were not lovers at all.

When they reached the door he bent down, took her gently in his arms, and kissed her on the lips for the first time. Then he lifted the latch and they went in.

All during the night the wind blew. The trees moaned as if in pain. But Nora was warm in her bed, too happy to sleep, too happy to analyse this new emotion which filled her. Was he too awake wondering at the immeasurable richness of life? Let this storm rage outside, it could not touch them, or take from them their happiness, so full, so secure!

She slept late the following morning, but then, it was Saturday, and there was no school. She was glad of that because the wind had become a gale. Slates were blown off the barn and were lying there, broken, with broken branches off the trees, in the wind-swept shivering yard. The animals were shut into their sheds. Their own big kitchen door was closed and bolted, a thing Nora had never seen before in the day-time.

It was cosy to be inside. The men told stories as they mended the harness, and polished the brass on it. The old woman knitted, Nora darned stockings. Ellen was the only one who moved around, doing her usual work, but she was

always in the background, and did not disturb the harmony of the place. Sometimes, she stopped in her work to listen to the stories with her dark face eager and her lips slightly apart.

It was William who fed the animals. Then he harnessed the chestnut mare, and came in to tell them that he was going off the Carrigaline, and would not be home for dinner. His mother looked anxious, and said, "But it is a terrible day! Tempting Providence you are, my son, to go out on a day like this."

"It is a grand day," said he, with sparkling eyes, "everything in the world gone crazy mad with laughing! And, myself, the craziest of them all, wild to be in the thick of it! Listen to it, isn't it grand?"

Throwing back his head he opened his mouth, and peal after peal of deep-voiced laughter rang out. Paddy put down the chain he was shining, and putting his hand to his side, joined in with bass fat notes, which grew louder and louder. Jimmy followed with some snorts which made him cough, and brought water to his eyes. Ellen stared for a moment at William, her face aglow, and then opening her mouth and baring her uneven teeth, joined in the glee, unconsciously and accurately echoing William's notes. Nora too looked at William, and a wave of hot feeling rushed over her which made her eyes shine and her breath come faster. She made no sound. Her emotion was for William himself. Neilus gave a few croaks, and then, as if ashamed of his gaiety, he smiled grimly and covered his mouth with his big hairy hand. The old woman was last to join in; and then her toothless mouth opened, and her fat body shook with soundless laughter.

When the fit was over, she was the first to speak, "Well, to be sure! Isn't he the daft man? I think we are all daft." Her face wrinkled up again with laughter, like a child's about to cry.

The milking-time was over in the afternoon, and they were

all taking their usual cup of tea, leisurely, as was their wont at this time, when the chestnut mare came at full gallop into the yard, alone. The reins were hanging down over her neck. Her head was raised high, and her tail straight out. She stopped short, and whinnied. They started to their feet, the same question in all eyes. Ellen made the sign of the cross on her breast. The men went out hurriedly, and the women followed.

"It is better for you to go back to the house, ma'am," said Paddy to the old woman, taking control, "this is men's work."

Without a word, the three women went back to the kitchen, and sat down in their usual places, the old woman near the fire, Nora on the settle opposite the window, Ellen on the chair near the door. Silent they sat, their hands folded in their laps, waiting—for whatever was to come.

They had not long to wait, half an hour or so, and then they heard the sounds of many voices, and the shuffling of feet. Paddy was the first to rush in, wild-eyed and white-faced.

"Come up into the parlour, ma'am, for God's sake," said he, in a quick hushed voice to the old woman. "Come, ma'am, come," and he tried to pull her by the hand.

"It is dead he is," said she in a deep deliberate voice, looking at him steadily in the eyes.

He turned away, and said gently, as if speaking to himself, "May God help you, ma'am, and give you comfort this blessed night."

She made no reply but closed her eyes, and her lips moved as if in prayer. They brought him in, and laid him on his bed in the room off the kitchen.

One of the neighbours had run for the priest, and another for the doctor. The priest came first, and he was now in the room giving conditional absolution to the dying—or dead—man.

"Pinned under a pine-tree he was," whispered one of the neighbours.

"The big one near the gate," added another.

"He must have been closing the gate when it happened."

"May God have mercy on his soul!"

"Amen," they all answered piously.

"The grand beautiful man he was!"

"And straight and tall as a pine himself!"

"May the Lord protect us all!"

"Amen," said the chorus of low voices.

The people of the house took no part in the conversation, gentle, kindly, and reverent though it was. Paddy was standing down near William's door, leaning against the dresser. His round fat face was trembling, and every now and then he wiped away a slow-moving heavy tear from his cheeks with the back of his hand. Neilus was standing over near the door, his little eyes glazed with unshed tears. His big mouth and jaw were closed very tight and every now and then he gulped. He was holding William's black felt hat in his folded arms. Jimmy was sitting on the settle, his face buried in his cap, sobbing aloud.

The three women were dry-eyed. The old woman was sitting in her usual place near the fire, swaying her body, and talking to herself in a low voice:

"It is always fond of trees he was, my little gorsoon. Climbing them he used to be, and swinging himself up in the branches. Like a bird he was, or a squirrel. And tearing his little breeches he used to be. 'What makes you be climbing the trees, avick?' I used to say to him. 'To be listening to the wind,' he used to say to me. 'But you'll be tearing your clothes, alanna!' 'I don't want any clothes at all,' and his rounded eyes would stare me big in the face. 'But it isn't a bird you are,' I would say then. 'Maybe it is,' and his starry eyes would be dancing in his head at the thought of it, 'maybe it is a bird I am!' Maybe it is—maybe it is—my little maneen—and the black light shining in his eyes——"

And so she continued her soft croon, living in the past, and dead to what was going on around her.

Nora was lying on her bed, her face buried in the pillow.

"What is death after all?" she was saying to herself. "Nothing, nothing. Love is the only thing that matters. And he loved me. He loved me. Nothing else matters. He is mine; I am his. We were wedded in love. Marriage is nothing. It is only love that matters. And he loved me, he loved me. We are nearer to each other than ever. There is nothing else now, only love. There will be only love always for both of us, for ever and for ever and for ever." She spoke softly, deliberately, her eyes closed, her whole being warm and at rest.

The storm had suddenly ceased, and Ellen was standing out near the dairy door, an empty bucket in her hand. She was perfectly still, and was gazing with narrowed eyes at something far away. After a long time, she muttered in a hard voice, which by degrees became soft and rich:

"We were both baulked. It is in the arms of the dark earth he'll be lying after all. Now she can't have him no more than me. Coming here where she was not wanted, with her pale face, and her cat's walk! And her blue Sunday dress with the flounces! And her lace collar and cuffs! It is bending over the smoke of the fire she should be for a bit! And the white hands of her! The spider, the weasel, the creeping, crawling thing! Stealing him away from me she would be, and from himself too! My own beautiful man, what would you be doing with the likes of her? What would she know about you? It isn't mating with her you'd be? Oh, no, no. The very stones would cry out against it. The mighty trees would lep out of their roots to prevent it. My own beautiful man! It is I am the woman for you, I, that used to be following you up the ridges thinning the turnips, and my mind only half on it, watching the long legs of you; I, that used to be with you, binding the yellow corn in the autumn, and God's own sun browning your neck and bare arms; browning me too, the both of us together. But now, I will be all alone among strangers, going my way lonesome all through this long life, until I die, never more watching the beautiful colours of your hair and lips, and the

breast of you when your shirt would be turned back. But I will never forget you, my own man, and in evening time when I am driving in the cows, in my own mind I will hear again your beautiful laugh, with all the thrushes of the world in your throat."

Then she went to fill her bucket with water.

# DESOLATION [1]

## *By* PAULINE SMITH

From *The Outspan* and *The Woman's Journal*

Alie van Staden was close on seventy-two years old when she went with her son Stephan, and her motherless little grandson, Stephan's Koos, to Mijnheer Bezedenhout's farm of Koelkuil in the Verlatenheld. She was a short squarely-built woman, slow in thought and slow in movement, with dark brown eyes set deep in a long, somewhat heavy and expressionless face. In her youth her eyes had been beautiful, but there was none who now remembered her youth and in old age she looked out upon the world with a patient endurance which had in it something of the strength and something of the melancholy of the labouring ox.

All her life, save for six months in her girlhood, Alie had lived in the Verlatenheld—that dreary stretch of the Great Karoo which lies immediately to the north of the Zwarkope mountains and takes its name from the desolation which nature displays here in the grey volcanic harshness of its kopjes and the scanty vegetation of its veld. This grey and desolate region was her world. Here, as the child of poor-whites and as the mother of poor-whites she had drifted for seventy years from farm to farm in the shiftless, thriftless labour of her class. Here in a bitter poverty she had married her man, borne her children, and accepted dumbly whatever ills her God had inflicted upon her. With her God she had no communion save in the patient uncomplaining fulfillment of his will as the daily circumstances of her life revealed it to her. Prayer was never wrung from her. That cry of "Our Father—our Father!" which comes so naturally

[1] Copyright, 1929, by Pauline Smith.

to the heart and from the lips of her race never came from hers. Sorrow had been her portion, but this was life as she conceived it, and tearless she had borne it. And now of all her sons Stephan alone was left to her, and already Stephan was suffering from that disease of the chest which had killed first his father and then his three brothers, Koos, Hendrick and Piet.

In her son, the bijwoner Stephan van Staden, there was none of old Alie's quiet endurance of life. The bijwoner could not without protest accept the ills which his God so persistently visited upon him. He was a weak and obstinate man who saw in his God a power actively engaged in direct opposition to himself, and at each fresh blow dealt him by his God he lifted up his voice and cried aloud his injury. At Koelkuil his voice was often thus raised, for here his illness rapidly increased, and here he found in his new master a harsh man made harsher by a drought which had brought him close to ruin.

The drought was in fact the worst that any middle-aged man of the Verlatenheld remembered. When Stephan went as bijwoner to Koelkuil the farm had had no rain for over two years and through all his eighteen months of service with Mijnheer only three light showers fell. Day after day men rose to a cloudless sky and hot shimmering air, or to a dry and burning wind that scorched and withered as it blew. Slowly, steadily, the grey earth became greyer, the bare kopjes barer, the veld itself empty of familiar life. The herds of spring-buck seeking water at the dried up fountains grew smaller and smaller. The field-mice, the tortoises, the meer-kats—all the humbler creatures of the veld—died out of ken. The starving jackal played havoc among the starving sheep. The new-born lamb was killed to save the starving ewe. The cattle, the sheep, the ostriches and the donkeys were drawn in their extremity closer to the abodes of men in their vain search for food. Their lowing and bleating drifted mournfully across the stricken land as slowly, steadily, their

famished bodies were gathered into the receiving earth and turned again to the dust from which they had sprung.

In the strain of these months there was constant friction between Stephan van Staden and his master. Nothing done by the one was right in the eyes of the other. Stephan, ill and irritable, was loud in his criticism of Mijnheer. Mijnheer, a ruined man, was unjust in the demands he made of his bijwoner. They came at last to an active open warfare into which all on the farm save old Alie were drawn. From their conflict she alone remained quietly aloof. Sitting on the high stone step in front of the bijwoner's house, gazing in melancholy across the Verlatenheld, she would listen in silence to the arguments of both master and man alike. Stephan's vehemence made him indifferent to her silence. Mijnheer resented and feared it. He read in it a judgment of himself, and who was this Alie the poor-white that she should judge him? Why did she never speak that he might answer? Of what did she think as she sat there, immovable as God, on the high stone step in front of the door? He did not know, and would never know, but he came in the end to hate this old woman so strong, it seemed to him, in her silence, so powerful in her patience. And when, in a spell of bitter cold, the bijwoner suddenly died, he thought with relief that now old Alie must go.

It was in the early winter of the fourth year of the drought that Stephan van Staden died, and on the day that he was buried Mijnheer, standing by the graveside, told Alie van Staden that his bijwoner's house would be needed at once for the man who was coming in her son's place. He was, he said, but naturally sorry for herself and the child, but doubtless they had relatives to whom they might go, and she must see for herself that it was impossible for him, a man well-nigh ruined by the drought, to do anything whatever to help her. She must know, also, that her son's illness had made him a poor bijwoner and added much to his losses among his sheep. In fact the more he thought of it the

more convinced he was that no other farmer in the Verlatenheld would have borne with Stephan so long as he, Godlieb Bezedenhout, had done. And on this note of righteousness he ended.

To all that Mijnheer had to say Alie listened, as always, in silence. What, indeed, was there for her to answer? Mijnheer spoke of relatives to whom she might turn for help for herself and Stephan's child, but in fact she had none. She was the last of her generation as Stephan had been the last of his. The poor-white is poor also in physique, and of all her consumptive stock only Stephan's Koos remained. Stephan's wife had died when her son was born, and her people had long since drifted out of sight, she could not say where. The child, therefore, had none but herself to stand between him and destitution. All that was to be done for him she herself must do. All that was to be planned for him she herself must plan.

Slowly, while her master spoke, these thoughts passed through her mind. But by no word did she betray them or the desolation of her heart. When he ceased she parted from him with a quiet "Good-day," and went back to the bijwoner's house with Stephan's Koos.

For her six-year old grandson Alie had a deep but inarticulate tenderness. All the little warmth that life still held for her came to her through Stephan's Koos. It was she who had saved him when Anna died. It was she who had stood between him and the fury of his father when Stephan, in his illness, turned against his own son. All that Stephan's son had known of love had come to him through her, yet for that love she had found no words and to it she could give no expression beyond a rare and awkward gesture, too harsh or too restrained to be called a caress. Yet the boy—a slim small child with eyes as dark as her own, and long thin fingers like the claws of a bird—was conscious of no shortcomings in his grandmother. His father had always been strange to him, and death had but added another mystery to the many which had surrounded him in life. But with

his grandmother nothing was strange or mysterious. With his grandmother he knew where he was going, he knew what he was doing. She was his tower of strength, his shadow of a great rock in a dry and thirsty land. By her side he was safe. Wherever she went, whatever she did, by her side he was safe. . . .

When they reached the house Alie sat down as was her custom upon the high stone step in front of the door, and the boy, pressing close to her side to deepen his sense of security there, sat down beside her. For a time they were silent, the child content, his grandmother brooding on the past. She was a woman of little imagination. Her mind, moving slowly among familiar things, was heavy always with the melancholy of the Verlatenheld, and from it she had but one escape—to the village of Hermansdorp where once as a girl she had lived with her mother's cousin, Tan' Betje, and worked with her at mattress-making at one of the stores. Beyond this her thoughts never ventured. And it was to Hermansdorp that her thoughts travelled slowly now with their dawning hope.

Before them, as they sat on the step, there stretched for mile after mile the grey and barren veld, the wild and broken kopjes of the Verlatenheld. But it was not these that old Alie saw. Her vision travelled slowly, painfully through the years to the long low line of hills to the north in a fold of which lay the village, with near it in the shade of a clump of thorn-trees, a dam where men and women journeying to the dorp for Sacrament, outspanned their carts and wagons. She saw again the white-washed church, and the graveyard, with its tall dark cypress trees among the white-washed tombs, where she and Tan' Betje had walked together on Sunday afternoons spelling out the names of those who lay buried there. She saw again the long wide straight Kerk Street, with its running furrows of clear water and its double row of pear trees in blossom. Behind the pear trees were white-washed dwelling-houses set back in gardens or green lands, and stores with stoeps built out on to the street under

the trees. At the head of the street, across it, stood the square white-washed gaol—and she remembered how, when first she had seen it, not knowing it to be the gaol, there had come into her mind that saying of our Lord: "In my Father's house are many mansions"—so big and gracious had this building seemed to her.

Tan' Betje's little house, she remembered, had been up a narrow lane. Three rooms it had had, with green wooden shutters, and a pear tree in the yard. Under the pear tree they had sat together cleaning the coir for mattresses—dipping it first into buckets of hot water, then teasing it and spreading it out in the sun to dry. For the poor they had made mattresses of mealie-leaves, stripping the dried leaves into shreds with a fork and packing them in to sacks. . . . It had been pleasant in the yard, and Tan' Betje's talk pleasant to hear. And in the little house there had always been food. She could not remember a day when there had not been food. Good food. Tan' Betje had been kind to her, and at the store too they had been kind. Her master's son had himself come several times to speak to her when she went for the coir. The old master would be dead now, perhaps. But the young master would be there. And he would remember. He would give her work. . . .

As if following her thoughts her fingers, stiff with labour and old age, fell awkwardly into the once familiar movements of teasing the coir in the sun-lit yard. The boy, wearied at last of her long silence, pressed closer to her side. She looked down upon him sombrely and drew his thin, claw-like hand into hers. Slowly, halting often in her speech, she began to talk to him of Hermansdorp where together they would go. And into the child's sense of security there came a new sense of romance and adventure deepening his confidence in the wisdom and rightness of all that his grandmother said and did.

That night, while her grandson slept, old Alie bundled together their few possessions. Mijnheer had given her three days in which to make her plans and preparations,

but she needed in her poverty less time than that for these. Stephan had come to Koelkuil a poor man and he had died a poorer, and in the meagre plenishing of the bijwoner's house there was little that could not be piled on to the rough unpainted cart by which, eighteen months earlier, they had journeyed to the farm. At dawn she roused the boy and with his help loaded the cart and inspanned the two donkeys. The donkeys were poor and starved, as were also the pitiful handful of sheep and goats which were all that remained of Stephan's flock. These, when all was ready, Koos drove out of the kraal towards her. And slowly, as the sun rose, they set off.

As they left the farm—the boy on foot herding the little flock, his grandmother perched high on the cart peering out upon the world from the depths of her black calico sunbonnet—there was little to mark their exodus as differing from any other than one might meet at any time in the Verlatenheld. The poor-white here, though he belongs to the soil, has no roots in the soil. He is by nature a wanderer, with none of that conservative love of place which makes to many men one spot on earth beloved above all others. Yet the range of his wanderings is limited, and the Verlatenheld man remains as a rule in the Verlatenheld, dwelling in no part of it long, and coming, it may be, again and again for short spells at a time to the farms which lie, for no clear reason, within the narrow course he sets himself.

For old Alie there was no longer any such course by which she might steer the rough unpainted cart across the wide stretches of the Verlatenheld. The graves of her sons were now the only claims she held there and to the vision of old age these graves were become but dwindling mounds of earth in a grey and desolate veld which treasured no memories. The bitter freedom of the poor and the bereft was hers. But it was without bitterness that she accepted it and, uncomplaining, took the road to Hermansdorp.

Throughout the first day it was in the Verlatenheld, with

frequent outspans, that they journeyed. And here, from sun-up to sun-down they met no human being and saw in the distance only one white-washed and deserted farmhouse, bare and tree-less in the drought-stricken veld. Every kuil or water-hole they passed was dry, and near every kuil were the skeletons of donkeys and sheep which had come there but to perish of their thirst. Of living things they saw only, now and then, a couple of koorhan rising suddenly in flight, or a lizard basking lazily in the sun. And once, bright as a jewel in that desert of sand and stone, they came upon a small green bush poisonous to sheep and cattle alike.

On the following day they struck the Malgas Hermansdorp road and, turning north, left the Verlatenheld behind them. The country ahead of them now was flat as a calm grey sea, its veld unbroken by any kopje until the long low line of the Hermansdorp hills was reached. Yet in the shimmering heat of noon this sea became a strange fantastic world that slipped into being, vanished, and slipped into being again as they gazed upon it. Around them now were ridges of hills where no hills could be, banks of trees where no trees grew, and water that was not water lying in sheets and lakes out of which rose strange dark islands and cliffs. For these phenomena old Alie had neither explanation nor name. They were indeed less clear to her than they were to the boy. But to him their very mystery brought an added sense of his own personal security. Whatever amazing and inexplicable things the distance, like the future, might hold, here, on the Hermansdorp road with his grandmother in the cart by his side, he was safe.

Yet already, as his grandmother well knew, their margin of safety on the Hermansdorp road was narrowing. Though on that second day they reached a water-hole in which, surrounded by deep slime, there still remained a small pool at which she could water her flock and her donkeys, by nightfall three of her sheep had died by the roadside and she knew that she must lose more. The veld here, though less bare than that of the Verlatenheld, yielded no grazing for them,

and the longer the journey the less could she save. Yet in their weakness she dare not press them and their progress was broken now by more and more frequent outspans which meant no food as well as no water for her donkeys and sheep, no food as well as no coffee for herself and Koos. The water in the water cask which hung below the cart must be dealt out sparingly if it were to carry them to the end of their journey, and there had been little to pack into the tin canister of food when they set out. This she explained to Koos, when, after lighting a fire of dried-up bushes, she put on no kettle to boil for coffee. The boy accepted her ruling as she herself accepted the ruling of God. All, he felt, would be right when they reached Hermansdorp.

It was on the morning of the third day that they came within sight of the township, lying, as old Alie remembered it, in a fold of the hills. In the cold bright winter air its white-washed buildings stood out clearly against their dark background, and the boy forgot for a moment his increasing hunger and burst into eager questioning. His grandmother answered him slowly, patiently, her thoughts on the dam outside the village where she would water her donkeys and sheep.

This day, however, was the hardest and most tedious of their journey. Many hours passed before they reached the dam and in these hours more of the sheep died and the going of the donkeys became a painful somnambulistic crawl. To ease their burden of her weight old Alie left her seat in the cart and walked by the side of the patient suffering beasts, calling them quietly by name. From time to time they turned towards her seeking with their tongues such moisture as her clothes might hold. And always when they did so she would speak to them quietly, as if speaking to children, of the Hermansdorp dam.

The dam lay about three miles to the south of the township, and for over fifty years men journeying to the village for market or the Sacrament had watered their flocks and spans here, and made it their last outspan on entering the

dorp, their first upon leaving it. It had been, too, the general picnic place of the village, and all old Alie's memories of it were stirring and gay. But as at last they neared it in the fading light of that winter afternoon there crept into her heart a sombre foreboding. The thorn-trees around it were not, as she had remembered them, laden with the scented golden balls of spring, for this was winter, and in winter they must be bare. But she knew before she reached them that they were bare not because winter had made them so but because drought had killed them. And she needed no telling, though a small dark girl broke away from an inspanned wagon, standing solitary beneath the trees, to cry the news aloud, that the dam was dry.

In the bitter wind of winter drought, which all day long had blown across the veld, these barren trees, this empty sun-baked hollow gaping to the indifferent heavens, this eager child triumphant with disaster, brought desolation to old Alie as it had never been brought to her in the familiar world of the Verlatenheld. Yet she gave no sign that her strength of mind and of body were well-nigh spent, but, wheeling the donkeys off the road, began patiently to outspan. As she did so there came towards her from the wagon a tall dark man smoking a pipe, and a cheerful round-faced woman carrying a child in her arms.

These strangers gave her greeting, and the man, beginning at once to help her, fell into easy friendly talk. It was true, he said, that there was no water in the dam, and never before had any man seen it so. If Mevrouw needed water and food for her donkeys and sheep there was none to be had until one reached the coffee-house in Hermansdorp. But it was clear that Mevrouw could take her sheep and donkeys no further now. Let her rest then at the fire he had made for his wife, and which they were just leaving, and he would see what he could do for her.

Old Alie thanked him and asked his name. He was, he said, Jan Nortie, bijwoner to Mijnheer Ludovic Westhuisen of Leeukuil, and this was Marta his wife. He had been to

the dorp on business for his master and was now on his way back to the farm. Had Mevrouw come from far, and had she far to go? It looked to him as if she had made a hard journey.

From Koelkuil in the Verlatenheld, answered old Alie, where but three days ago she had buried her son, the father of her little Koos here. And to Hermansdorp they were now going.

Then surely, said Jan Nortie, Mevrouw had journeyed in sorrow. But let her go now and sit with his wife by the fire and drink coffee and he would see to her donkeys and sheep.

With the numbed docility of utter weariness Alie obeyed him and, holding Koos by the hand, followed Marta to the fire. Here, handing the baby over to the child who had first run out to greet them, Jan Nortie's wife busied herself about her guests, putting coffee and food before them. She was a plump motherly young woman, many years her husband's junior, and in her pleasant soothing voice there was a persuasive kindliness which made old Alie think of her mother's cousin Tan' Betje. Just in the same gentle and pitying way had Tan' Betje mourned over the sorrows of others. Was it but three days ago, asked Jan Nortie's wife, that Ou-ma had buried her son? Our Father! And this was his only child? And an orphan? Then surely the hand of the Lord had been heavy upon her! But upon whom was his hand not heavy in this bitter time of drought? Throughout all the land was ruin and desolation such as no man living remembered. Turn where one would there was sorrow. Men that had been rich were now poor, and those that had been poor were now starving, taking their children like sheep to be fed at the orphan-house in Hermansdorp. It was to the orphan-house that they had been that day with gifts from Mijnheer and Mevrouw at Leeukuil. The pastor had asked that all who could do so should send food and clothing to the orphan-house for those in need, and several times now Mijnheer had sent Jan Nortie in with the

wagon. Was it perhaps to the orphan-house that Ou-ma was taking the child?

"To the orphan-house," repeated old Alie vaguely. No, it was not to the orphan-house she was going. It was to Canter's store. To work there at mattress-making.

Was Ou-ma then a mattress-maker, asked Jan Nortie's wife in wonder. And where was this Canter's store?

At the head of the Kerk straat, answered old Alie. Close by the gaol.

Was Ou-ma sure?

Sure? asked old Alie sombrely. How could she be but sure? Had she not worked there with her mother's cousin Tan' Betje?

In her answers, as in her silence, there was that quiet aloofness which had so baffled Mijnheer Bezedenhout, and Jan Nortie's wife said no more. There was no such store as Canter's in the Kerk straat, nor had there ever been within her memory. But who was she that she should disturb the faith of old age? In Hermansdorp Ou-ma must surely have friends, or why should she go there. And they would see how it was with her. . . . She turned, smiling, to the boy. His little eager face was pinched with hunger and cold, but his eyes were bright, his spirit still adventurous, his safety still assured. For him, she knew, Canter's store was where his grandmother said it was—at the head of the Kerk straat, close to the gaol. And who was she that she should disturb the faith of childhood?

She had turned to more practical matters and was packing some food into a canister for Ou-ma and the boy when Jan Nortie rejoined them. He had, he said, reloaded Mevrouw's cart so that its weight should be more evenly balanced, and he had done what he could for her sheep, but it was doubtful if more than four of them could reach the dorp. As things were Mevrouw had better spend the night here and set off again at dawn. He wished much that he could have done more for her, but doubtless in Hermansdorp she had friends

who would help her. And now, as it was already late, he himself must be moving. . . .

When Jan Nortie and his wife had left them and the sound of their wagon wheels had died away into the swiftly gathering darkness old Alie settled down with the boy before the fire. Warmed and comforted he soon fell asleep, but for her there was no sleep, no escape from her weariness, no relief to her melancholy. Throughout the long night pain crept through her body with the quiet gentle insistence of a slowly rising tide. By no effort of will and no physical means within her power could she stem it. In her discomfort her mind fell into a confusion of thought for the future and memory of the past. It was now Tan' Betje's voice that she heard, speaking of work to do for Canter's store. It was now Jan Nortie's wife who spoke, telling of the orphan-house in Hermansdorp. Out of the darkness beyond the firelight the orphan-house and the store took shape in her thoughts, vanished and took shape again as the mirages in the veld had done in the heat of the previous noon. When dawn came it was in weariness of body and with mind unrested that she roused herself to the labours of a new day and set off for the coffee-house.

The coffee-house in Hermansdorp, one of the oldest houses in the village, was a long, gabled, yellow-washed building at the lower end of the Kerk straat. Its yard stood open to the street, and here, as in the market square, carts and wagons were outspanned by those who came to the dorp for the quarterly Sacrament or the weekly market. In good seasons Andries Geldenhuis and his wife did brisk trade with their coffee and cakes, but in this time of drought there were few with money to spend and those who outspanned at the coffee-house now were those who had been driven in distress from their lands to seek help from their church, or relief from the government. Among these, when she reached the village at noon, old Alie with her grandson, her rough, unpainted cart, her exhausted donkeys and

famishing sheep, took her place almost unnoticed. Only with Andries himself did she have speech. And to him, when her sheep and donkeys had been watered and fed, she said briefly that she had business at the head of the Kerk straat: that tomorrow she would be selling her sheep and her donkeys at the morning market: and that after the sale she would pay him what was due.

In spring, when the pear trees which lined it were in blossom against the dark background of the enfolding hills, the wide straight Kerk straat in Hermansdorp had an enchanting beauty, and it was in spring that, as a young girl, old Alie had first seen it. Today, like the thorn trees at the dam, the trees were bare, and the furrows at their roots all waterless. In the open roadway the dust lay deep in ruts, and here, as in the veld, the wind which raised the dust in stinging blinding clouds had the bitter cold of winter drought. Against the wind and the flying dust old Alie's progress was slow. There was, it seemed to her now, no part of her body which was not in pain. As she leant on his shoulder for a moment her hand felt hot to Koos through his jacket and shirt. She spoke little, but the boy who had never seen the Kerk straat in spring and to whom the bare trees, the stir of life, the shops, the houses, the very dust brought an enchantment of their own, was unconscious of her silence. This was not perhaps the Hermansdorp his grandmother had described—but that, as yet, he had hardly realised. Here was romance. Here was adventure. And here still, at his grandmother's side, was safety.

They came presently to a high, long, white-washed wall and here his grandmother halted. Over the top of the wall the boy could see row upon row of straight slender trees, all a dull rusty brown—cypress trees killed by the drought. Between the trees, out of his sight, were the white-washed tombs among which in her youth old Alie had wandered. But what had been a garden to her then was now a wilderness in the drought and she turned heavily away.

Beyond the graveyard came the church and the parsonage,

and dwellinghouses set back in deep gardens or built close on the street with stoeps slightly raised above the side-walk. Fifty years had brought little change to these, but at the upper end of the street where the business of the dorp was carried on, only the old white-washed gaol was as she remembered it. And here, when at last they reached the grey stone buildings which now surrounded the gaol, she searched for Canter's store in vain. That it still existed she could not bring herself to doubt. And as the signs above the doorways meant nothing to her, for without Tan' Betje's help she could not spell them out, she entered the building which stood, as far as she could judge, where Canter's once had stood and asked to see the master.

A young man was appealed to and came forward pleasantly to ask what he could do for her. She said again that she wished to see the master, and was told that he himself was the master.

Was his name Canter? she asked. And was answered that it was Isaacs.

Was not this then Canter's store?

The young man repeated that it was Isaacs'. There was, he said, no Canter's store in Hermansdorp nor any family of that name, though there might well have been before his time. But what was it that she had wished to buy at Canter's store? No doubt, whatever it was, he himself, Isaacs, would be able to supply it.

Old Alie answered that she had not come to buy but to seek for work. Many years ago she had worked here, at Canter's store, at mattress-making, and it was such work she sought now. Could Mijnheer perhaps employ her?

That, said the young man, was impossible. Mattresses were sent to him ready-made from wholesale stores in Cape Town, and no stores in Hermansdorp now made their own. But was she sure that there was nothing he could sell her? Prints? Calicoes? A warm shawl, let down in price because of the drought? A coat for the boy?

There was nothing. Aloof, patient, giving no sign of the

blow that had fallen upon her, old Alie waited for the young man to cease, then bade him a quiet good-day and left the store.

Out in the wind-swept street she paused, and the boy, conscious for the first time of some hesitation in her movements, looked up at her anxiously. In the store he had heard nothing of the young man's talk with his grandmother, for his mind had been held by the strange and wonderful things displayed around him there. But now suddenly, in his grandmother's hesitation, came his first hint of insecurity, and with it romance died out of the long bare Kerk straat in which they stood forlorn. Quickly his hand slipped again into hers. She looked down upon him vaguely, strangely, and saying no word moved heavily down the street.

Against the wind, on their way to the store, their progress had been slow, but it was slower than ever now. What now must she do for the child? Where now must she turn for work? Andries Geldenhuis had said that in the morning market donkeys were sold for a shilling and less, for who in this drought could afford to feed donkeys? And sheep, he had said, in such poor condition as hers, could bring her but little more. When these and the cart were sold she would have money perhaps for a few days' shelter and food at the coffee-house—but afterwards? . . .

She could not see what was to come afterwards. . . . Yet the boy must have food. At Tan' Betje's little house there had always been food. Good food. If she could find Tan' Betje's house now there might still be people there who remembered her—Betje Fereira, the mattress-maker. And they perhaps, might, help her. . . .

In their slow progress they had come now to the opening of a lane which ran from the Kerk straat to the Upper Street, and it was up such a lane that Tan' Betje had lived. Right at the head of the lane the house had stood . . . and to the head of the lane she would go.

To the head of the lane they went in silence—and came not to the white-washed green-shuttered house of Betje

Fereira the mattress-maker, but to a plain double-storied building in a bare wide playground. Here boys and girls together, some Koos' age, some older and some younger, were playing at ball. In a corner of the playground, against a sunny wall, sat a young girl of twenty, sewing. From time to time the children appealed to her in their play, or were joined by her in their laughter. In the cook-house, close to the main building, the mid-day meal was being prepared, and from the house itself came the clatter of plates being set out on a long trestle table by a coloured girl who sang at her work.

Slowly, as she halted with Koos in front of the fence, these sights and sounds impressed themselves upon old Alie's mind. The talk of Jan Nortie's wife came back to her. This, then, was the orphan-house. This, then, was where the children of the poor were taken to be fed. . . . At first her mind grasped nothing but this. . . . Then slowly she began to reason. If she could not find work how could she feed Koos? And where was she to find work in a place where mattresses were no longer made? How was she now to plan for the child? He too, like these others must have food. And here, for the asking—had not Jan Nortie's wife said it?—was food.

For herself old Alie had at that moment no thought. What she herself would do if she left the boy here, and where she herself would turn for food were questions which simply did not arise in her mind. Nor, in her ignorance of the ways of the world, did it occur to her that certain formalities might have to precede a child's acceptance at the orphan-house. With no note from the pastor, no order from any of those who supported the orphan-house, but with Koos' hand held close in her own, she pushed open the gate and entered the yard.

From the seat against the wall the young girl came forward quickly to greet her. Had Mevrouw come to leave the child with them? she asked. The pity then was that Juffrouw Volkwijn was not here to receive him. Only she herself,

Justine de Jager, was here—in charge for the day. But if it was all in order that the child was to come to them, would Mevrouw leave him, and come again herself in the evening to see Juffrouw Volkwijn? Would it suit Mevrouw to do so?

She spoke at a rush, giving no pause for answer. That old Alie had come with the necessary note of admission she never doubted and did not stop to question. Her eager nature had little time for formality of any kind. Let Koos—Koos was his name? Koos van Staden? Let Koos take his place as the children lined up for the mid-day meal—the bell was just about to ring—and let Mevrouw come again in the evening. . . .

As she spoke the bell rang. Instantly, the children ceased their play and formed into line, the girls in one row, the boys in another. Taking him quickly but not unkindly by the shoulder Justine pushed Koos into place at the end of the row of boys. At a sharp word of command from her the girls filed into the house, the boys followed. At the doorway Koos lagged, looking back in bewilderment and appeal to his grandmother. Again Justine seized him by the shoulder, and pushed him into the room before her. The door closed, but through the open windows old Alie could hear the tramp of feet on the bare carpetless floor: then silence: then the raising of sweet clear shrill voices in the children's grace—"Thanks to our Father now we give. . . ." She turned, and made her way with slow heavy steps to the gate.

It was long past the dinner hour when old Alie at last reached the coffee-house and crossed the yard to her outspanned cart. As she passed them two women seated near a wagon gave her greeting. She made no answer. The women exchanged glances. Who was she then, this old woman who was too proud to return their greeting? For a moment or two they watched her curiously, resenting, as Mijnheer Bezedenhout had resented, her aloofness—then fell again to their talk.

Unaware of their glances as she had been of their greeting, old Alie sat down on her low folding stool. The pain which

had racked her limbs throughout the previous night and throughout the morning had given way now to a numbness which made it difficult for her to control her movements, and she sat awkwardly on the stool, seeking such support as she could get from the wheel at her back. Her hands lay idle on her lap, and from the depths of her black calico sunbonnet her dark eyes looked out upon a world that was growing each moment more strange and unreal to her. It was not the coffee-house yard that she saw. It was the Verlatenheld: it was the orphan-house: it was Canter's store: it was Tan' Betje's little house with the pear-tree in the yard. But always, whatever it was, it was Koos' face turned towards her in bewilderment and appeal—adding sorrow to her sorrow. . . . The young girl, Justine, ought not to have parted them so, closing the door between them. But surely she had meant no harm. And presently, when it came towards evening, she, Alie, would go back to the orphan-house and explain to him that she must leave him there until she found work. . . . Just a little while she would leave him, and then, when she had found work, she would come for him again and they would go together to Tan' Betje's little house. Up some other lane it must be, but she would find it. A little house with green shutters and a pear-tree in the yard . . . buckets under the pear-tree . . . and coir spread out in the sun.

Once again the bent fingers began to play in her lap—teasing the coir as once long ago she had teased it: dipping it into the bucket at her side: shaking it: teasing it: spreading it out in the sun to dry. . . .

One of the women seated by the wagon, chancing to look up, saw this strange play, watched it for a moment, then rose and ran towards the cart. She shook old Alie's shoulder gently and spoke to her. Ou-ma are you ill? Are you ill then Ou-ma?

Old Alie did not hear. A little while longer she played with the coir—teasing it, plucking it—then at last her fingers grew still.

# THE YEARBOOK OF THE BRITISH, IRISH, AND COLONIAL SHORT STORY

JUNE, 1928, TO MAY, 1929

# THE BEST BRITISH, IRISH, AND COLONIAL SHORT STORIES

## JUNE 1, 1928 TO MAY 31, 1929

NOTE. *Only stories by British, Irish, and Colonial writers are listed. American, British, Irish, and Colonial periodicals have been reviewed.*

## I. BRITISH AUTHORS

ALMEDINGEN, E. M.
Lover. Queen. Sept. 26, '28.

ANGLIN, NORMAN.
At an Old Sign. Manchester Guardian. May 17, '29.

ARMSTRONG, MARTIN.
Fiery Dive. Fortnightly Review. Aug.–Sept., '28.
Sombrero. London Mercury. Feb., '29.

AUMONIER, STACY.
Armistice. Windsor Magazine. Nov., '28.
Nothing Ever Happens. Strand Magazine. Oct., '28.
Song of Praise. Pearson's Magazine. Mar., '29.
Straight Griggs. Strand Magazine. Dec., '28.

BARBER, ALEX.
Galley Slave. Queen. Oct. 17, '28.
Recompense. Queen. Aug. 29, '28.

BARCLAY, MRS. HUBERT.
Blakes Hold. Blackwood's Magazine. Nov., '28.

BARKER, NUGENT.
Invalid. Fortnightly Review. Dec., '28.
Mrs. Sayce's Guy. Life and Letters. May, '29.
Whessoe. Life and Letters. Dec., '28.

BASHFORD, H. H.
Afternoon of March. Windsor Magazine. Feb., '29.

BATES, H. E.
Child. Criterion. Jan., '29.
Father. New Adelphi. June, '28.
Tinker's Donkey. Manchester Guardian. Nov. 9, '28.
BEALE, NORA ST. JOHN.
Lime Trees. New Adelphi. Sept., '28.
BENNETT, ARNOLD.
Nine o'Clock To-morrow. Argosy (London). May, '29.
BENSON, STELLA.
Man Who Missed the 'Bus. Fortnightly Review. Mar., '29. Harper's Magazine. Mar., '29.
Unsatisfactory Conversation on Soft-Boiled Eggs. Eve. Sept. 12, '28.
BETHELL, L. SLINGSBY.
Traveller Returns. Cornhill Magazine. Apr., '29.
BLANCKENSEE, MURIEL D.
Chance Acquaintance. Cornhill Magazine. May, '29.
BOWEN, ELIZABETH.
Pink Biscuit. Eve. Nov. 22, '28.
BROOME, DORA M.
Cheese. Manchester Guardian. Dec. 6, '28.
Island. Manchester Guardian. June 11, '28.
Spinsters. Manchester Guardian. Oct. 29, '28.
Spring Song. Manchester Guardian. Mar. 27, '29.
BURKE, THOMAS.
Hands of Mr. Ottermole. Story-Teller. Feb., '29.
Host of Golden Fairies. Cassell's Magazine. Mar., '29.
Mr. Wing Moy and Mr. Ah Fook. T. P.'s Weekly. Jan. 19, '29.
C., R. H.
Simple Life. Manchester Guardian. Aug. 15, '28.
CHESTERTON, G. K.
Asylum of Adventure. Nash's Magazine. Oct., '28.
Moderate Murderer. Cassell's Magazine. Apr., '29.
Purple Jewel. Story-Teller. Mar., '29.
CLARK, DUDLEY.
Event. Manchester Guardian. Sept., 26, '28.
COOK, H. T. KEMBALL.
Dream Book Shop. Spectator. Sept. 15, '28.
COPPARD, A. E.
Green Drake. Everyman. Jan. 31, '29.
Limping Lady. Nash's Magazine. Mar., '29.
Presser. Bermondsey Book. Sept.–Nov., '28.
CORNIER, VINCENT.
Wolf's Homing. Story-Teller. Mar., '29.

COYLE, KATHLEEN.
Russian Women. Time and Tide. Mar. 22, '29.
CRAWSHAW, ANNICE.
Correspondence. Manchester Guardian. Sept. 13, '28.
CUMBERLAND, MARTEN.
Mrs. Lindenbaum. Eve. Oct. 31, '28.
DAVEY, NORMAN.
First Violin. Argosy (London). Jan., '29.
DAVIES, RHYS.
Bed of Feathers. London Aphrodite. Oct., '28.
DAWSON, CONINGSBY.
Life Everlasting. Delineator. May, '29.
DEARDEN, HAROLD.
Strange Case of Mrs. Arkwright. Nash's Magazine. Jan., '29.
Cosmopolitan. Oct., '28.
DELAFIELD, E. M.
Mother Theresa Makes Her Meditation. Time and Tide. June 22, '28.
"DORSET, F. H."
Silver Wedding. Cornhill Magazine. Nov., '28.
DUDENEY, MRS. HENRY.
Saddler's Shop. Windsor Magazine. Sept., '28.
ELSTEIN, NOAH.
Miss Aybel and Miss Aked. Manchester Guardian. Sept. 4, '28.
Old Tsirrie. Manchester Guardian. Aug. 17, '28.
ERSKINE, JOHN STEUART.
Santa Cruz. London Mercury. Sept., '28.
Witch. Munsey's Magazine. May, '29.
EUSTACE, C. J.
Obsession. English Review. Jan., '29. Canadian Forum. Oct., '28.
FINDLATER, JANE H.
"Vimmy." Cornhill Magazine. Dec., '28.
GALSWORTHY, JOHN.
Bargain. Chicago Tribune. Dec. 2, '28.
Dog at Timothy's. Delineator. Jan., '29.
Sad Affair. Chicago Tribune. Feb. 3, '29.
GARNETT, DAVID.
Russian Story. Life and Letters. Nov., '28.
GAUKROGER, ELEANOR.
Derelict. Manchester Guardian. Apr. 18, '29.
GERHARDI, WILLIAM.
Winter Silence. Eve. Nov. 22, '28.
GIBBONS, STELLA.
Spring. Everyman. Apr. 4, '29.

GOITEIN, E. D.
Egyptian Nocturne. New Statesman. Nov. 10, '28.
GOLDING, LOUIS.
Propositions in Paint. Eve. Feb. 13, '29.
GORDON, JAN.
Romance Sans Paroles. Cornhill Magazine. July, '28.
GOSSMAN, OLIVER.
Footnote to Glory. Blackwood's Magazine. Nov., '28.
GREGSON, JAMES R.
Child in Church. Manchester Guardian. Apr. 16, '29.
GRIFF, ALAN.
Midsummer Day's Dream. Colour. Feb., '29.
HADFIELD, JOHN.
Mr. Carey Calls. Everyman. May 23, '29.
Troubadour. Everyman. Mar. 14, '29.
HARDY, THOMAS.
Old Mrs. Chundle. Ladies' Home Journal. Feb., '29.
HESSLEGRAVE, E.
Study in Shadows. Manchester Guardian. Dec. 27, '28.
HUDDLESTON, SISLEY.
Shepherd's Call. New Statesman. Jan. 26, '29.
HUEFFER, OLIVER MADOX.
Suicide. Manchester Guardian. Jan. 23, '29.
HUGHES, RICHARD.
High Wind in Jamaica. Forum. Dec., '28.
HUNT, VIOLET.
Faithful Fool. T. P.'s Weekly. Apr. 20, '29.
HUTCHINSON, RAY CORYTON.
Rendezvous for Mr. Hopkins. English Review. Feb., '29.
JESSE, F. TENNYSON.
Treasure Trove. Story-Teller. Sept., '28.
JOHNSON, DOROTHY.
Doctor. Queen. Oct. 24, '28.
Door in the Attic. English Review. Aug., '28.
Simcox—The Explanation. London Mercury. Apr., '29.
KAYE-SMITH, SHEILA.
Trimmer's Painted Gate. Ladies' Home Journal. May, '29.
KERSHAW, FAY.
Devotee. Manchester Guardian. Jan. 22, '29.
KIPLING, RUDYARD.
"Dayspring Mishandled." Strand Magazine. July, '28.
Woman in His Life. McCall's Magazine. Sept., '28.
London Magazine. Dec., '28.
"LANE, JANE."
Afternoon Tea. Manchester Guardian. Oct. 21, '28.

LAWRENCE, D. H.
Blue Moccasins. Eve. Nov. 22, '28.
Plain Talk. Feb., '29.
Mother and Daughter. Criterion. Apr., '29.
Things. Bookman (N. Y.) Aug., '28.
Fortnightly Review. Oct., '28.
LINKLATER, ERIC.
Dancers. London Mercury. May, '29.
LYONS, A. NEIL.
Miss Brown's Baby. Windsor Magazine. July, '28.
M., F.
Quartet. Manchester Guardian. Apr. 8, '29.
MACCARTHY, DESMOND.
Bear. Life and Letters. Feb., '29.
MACDONALD, K. C.
Silver Bird. G. K.'s Weekly. Nov. 10–17, '28.
MACDONELL, A. R.
White Women. Slavonic Review. June, '28.
MANHOOD, H. A.
Happy Man. Colour. Jan., '29.
Soundings. Now and Then. Winter, '28.
MANNING-SANDERS, GEORGE.
Exchange. Everyman. Apr. 25, '29.
Path. Manchester Guardian. Nov. 21, '28.
Raiment. Manchester Guardian. Aug. 20, '28.
Ring. Manchester Guardian. Mar. 19, '29.
Wife. Criterion. Sept., '28.
Wreckers. Manchester Guardian. July 3, '28.
MANSFIELD, KATHERINE.
Mary. Harper's Magazine. Aug., '28.
Woman's Journal. May, '29.
MARSHALL, ARCHIBALD.
Reflection. London Mercury. July, '28.
MASSINGHAM, H.
Fire. Manchester Guardian. Apr. 23, '29.
Odd Verger. Manchester Guardian. Oct. 30, '28.
MAUGHAM, W. SOMERSET.
Derelict. Nash's Magazine. Apr., '29.
Cosmopolitan. Feb., '29.
Four Dutchmen. Nash's Magazine. Feb., '29.
Cosmopolitan. Dec., '28.
MONKHOUSE, ALLAN N.
Imaginative Observer. Manchester Guardian. July 26, '28.
MONRO, HAROLD.
True Adventure at Dawn. Criterion. Sept., '28.

MONTAGUE, C. E.
Fatalist. Harper's Magazine. June, '28.
In the Ways of His Heart. Harper's Magazine. Oct., '28.
Strand Magazine. Mar., '29.
Judith. Nash's Magazine. Sept., '28.
Red Book Magazine. Sept., '28.
Man Afraid. Windsor Magazine. July, '28.
Old Order. Woman's Journal. Sept., '28.
Wisdom of Mrs. Trevanna. London Mercury. Oct., '28.
Bookman (N. Y.) Oct., '28.
Wodjabet. Windsor Magazine. Dec., '28.
MORROUGH, E. R.
Psyche. New Statesman. June 23, '28.
MORTON, J. B.
Hag of Auvergne. New Statesman. May 25, '29.
MOTTRAM, R. H.
Devil's Own. Pall Mall. Oct., '28.
Headless Hound. Windsor Magazine. May, '29.
Old Man's Chair. Century Magazine. Dec., '28.
"Pagliacci." Hutchinson's Story-Magazine. Oct., '28.
Performance. T. P.'s Weekly. Sept. 1, '28.
Young Hamilton Tighe. Pall Mall. Nov., '28.
NICOLSON, HAROLD.
Arthur Peabody. Nash's Magazine. Nov., '28.
ONIONS, OLIVER.
"John Gladwin Says. . . ." London Magazine. Aug., '28
PAIN, BARRY.
One Magazine. Windsor Magazine. Oct., '28.
PARSONS, ANTHONY.
Man Who Couldn't Die. Royal Magazine. Mar., '29.
PECK, WINIFRED F.
Hornbeam Hedge. Cornhill Magazine. Sept., '28.
PHILLPOTTS, ADELAIDE EDEN.
Chess. Good Housekeeping (London). July, '28.
Seeker. Good Housekeeping (London). Nov., '28.
PHILLPOTS, EDEN.
Devil and the Deep Sea. Chicago Tribune. Apr. 17, '29
Mary's Emerald. Pearson's Magazine. Feb., '29.
Tyrant. Grand Magazine. Aug., '28.
Woodstack. Windsor Magazine. Dec., '28.
POWYS, T. F.
Another Godiva. London Aphrodite. Oct., '28.
Mr. Toller's New Clothes. Bermondsey Book. Sept.–Nov., '28.
RAYMOND, WALTER.
Forest Philosopher. Everyman. Mar. 7, '29.

ROYDE-SMITH, NAOMI.
Face. Story-Teller. July, '28.
SHARP, MARGERY.
Scarlet Swan. Piccadilly. May 25, '29.
SHEARD, BENVENUTO.
Unburied. Criterion. June, '28.
SIMPSON, VIOLET A.
One Word. Fortnightly Review. July, '28.
SPRIGGE, SIR SQUIRE.
Man of Letters. Cornhill Magazine. Oct., '28.
STRACHEY, SIR CHARLES.
Nomenclatist. Cornhill Magazine. May, '29.
STRONG, L. A. G.
Gurnet. Irish Statesman. Sept. 15, '28.
"Prongs." John o'London's Weekly. Mar. 30, '29.
Sick Man. Dial. Feb., '29.
Travellers. Dublin Magazine. Oct.–Dec., '28.
TALLAND, JOHN.
Misadventure. T. P.'s Weekly. Oct. 6, '28.
THORNTON, D. M.
Angles. English Review. Feb., '29.
Circle. Queen. June 20, '28.
THURSTON, E. TEMPLE.
Rosicrucian. Nash's Magazine. May–June, '29.
TINDALL, C.
Money Makes a Difference. Queen. July 11, '28.
TOWERS, FRANCES.
Helen. Queen. May 22, '29.
TOWNLEY, MARION.
Question of Cost. Manchester Guardian. Aug. 28, '28.
W., R. E.
*See* WARNER, R. E.
WALPOLE, HUGH.
Ecstasy. Nash's Magazine. Jan., '29.
Harper's Bazar. Oct., '28.
WARE, JESSICA.
Frost. English Review. Apr., '29.
WARNER, R. E.
Sweet Peas. Manchester Guardian. Sept. 18, '28.
WATSON, E. H. LACON.
Escape. London Mercury. Nov., '28.
WEBB, MARY.
Bread House. Argosy (London). Feb., '29.
Over the Hills and Far Away. T. P.'s Weekly. Jan. 5, '29.

WETJEN, ALBERT RICHARD.
Off Finisterre. Adventure. Feb. 15, '29.
"WHARTON, ANTHONY."
Man Who Stood Still. Pictorial Review. Sept., '28.
WHIPPLE, DOROTHY.
Miss Boddy. Everyman. May 30, '29.
WHITAKER, MALACHI.
Frost in April. New Adelphi. Mar.–May, '29.
Old Abraham. New Adelphi. Sept., '28.
WHITEHOUSE, FRANK.
Wooing. Manchester Guardian. Aug. 21, '28.
WILLIAMS, HARCOURT.
"Where I Did Begin. . . ." Bermondsey Book. Dec., '28–Feb., '29.
WILLIAMSON, HENRY.
Bill Brock's Farewell. Outsiders. May, '29.
Drama of the Needles. Outsiders. May, '29.
Heller. Cassell's Magazine. Sept., '28.
WYLIE, I. A. R.
Last Honour. Story-Teller. Oct., '28.
Chicago Tribune. Sept. 9, '28.
YOUNG, FRANCIS BRETT.
Shellis' Reef. Saturday Evening Post. Mar. 2, '29.

## II. IRISH AUTHORS

"BIRMINGHAM, GEORGE A."
Raid. Forum. Sept., '28.
COLUM, PADRAIC.
Interior. Commonweal. June 20, '28.
ICKIE, TOM.
Big Bully Moffat. Eve. Apr. 24, '29.
Power. Tatler. May 8, '29.
"DOYLE, LYNN."
Change in Liza. Strand Magazine. Feb., '29.
DUNSANY, LORD.
How Jembu Played for Cambridge. Graphic. Christmas Number, '28.
FISHER, O. N.
Old Mrs. Rummadge. Irish Statesman. July 7, '28.
KELLER, T. G.
Wizard. Dublin Magazine. July–Sept., '28.
KELLY, THOMAS.
Misapprehension. Manchester Guardian. Mar. 14, '29.

MacNamara, Brinsley.
Last of the Clutch. T. P.'s Weekly. Mar. 9, '29.
Smiling Faces. Dublin Magazine. Jan.–Mar., '29.
Moore, George.
Aphrodite in Aulis. Vanity Fair. Feb.–Mar., '29.
O'Byrne, Cathal.
Two Mothers. Columbia. Feb., '29.
O'Callaghan, Maeve.
On a Platform. Bermondsey Book. Mar.–May, '29.
O'Connor, Frank.
After Fourteen Years. Dublin Magazine. Apr.–June, '28.
Awakening. Dublin Magazine. July–Sept., '28.
Picture. Irish Statesman. Apr. 6, '29.
O Faoláin, Seán.
Fugue. Hound and Horn. Sept., '28.
O'Flaherty, Liam.
Letter. Criterion. June, '28.
Old Hunter. Argosy (London). Mar., '29.
Patsa. London Aphrodite. Aug., '28.
Red Barbara. London Aphrodite. Oct., '28.
O'Leary, Margaret.
Mated. The Dial. Apr., '29.

## III. COLONIAL AUTHORS

Aujard, Edouard A. (*Australia.*)
Sunny Side of Suicide. Bulletin (Sydney). Jan. 23, '29.
Butchart R. Exon. (*Australia.*)
Man Who Could Not Die. Bulletin (Sydney). Apr. 24, '29.
Crocker, C. I. (*South Africa.*)
This Gift—Life. Outspan. Mar. 7, '29.
Fane, Margaret, *and* Lofting, Hilary. ("Francis Osborn.")
(*See also* Lofting, Hilary.) (*Australia.*)
Bim. Bulletin (Sydney). Apr. 10, '29.
Just Joe. Bulletin (Sydney). Aug. 1, '28.
Last Mile. Sydney Mail. Jan. 23, '29.
"Loo." Bulletin (Sydney). Jan. 23, '29.
Mr. Appleyard Gets a Job. Bulletin (Sydney). June 6, '28.
Not Too Clever. Bulletin (Sydney). Mar. 6, '29.
Rich Man of Brazier Street. Bulletin (Sydney). Aug. 22, '28.
Flather, H. ("Norman Weston.") (*South Africa.*)
Grooves. Outspan. Jan. 18, '29.
Gunn, A. Gordon. (*South Africa.*)
Case of Corporal Meddow. Outspan. Jan. 18, '29.

HILL, WILLIAM LANE. (*South Africa.*)
Old Bed. Outspan. Sept. 28, '28.
HOWARD, STEWART. (*Australia.*)
Boy and the Miniature. New Triad. July 1, '28.
JAMES, C. L. R. (*Trinidad.*)
Artist's Mother. Quarterly Magazine (Trinidad). Dec., '28.
KAYE, LOUIS. (*South Africa.*)
Gossipers. Windsor Magazine. Apr., '29.
LOFTING, HILARY. (*Australia.*)
(*See also* FANE, MARGARET, *and* LOFTING, HILARY.)
Poinsettia. Sydney Mail. Dec. 19, '28.
MCCALLUM, G. R. (*Australia.*)
Drought. Sydney Mail. Jan. 9, '29.
MAKIN, WILLIAM J. (*South Africa.*)
Cannon off the Red. Outspan. Apr. 12, '29.
Three of Them. T. P.'s Weekly. Feb. 23, '29.
MENDES, ALFRED H. (*Trinidad.*)
Torrid Zone. Quarterly Magazine (Trinidad). Dec., '28.
Lai John. London Mercury. Jan., '29.
"OSBORN, FRANCIS." (*Australia.*)
*See* FANE, MARGARET, *and* LOFTING, HILARY.
PENTZ, H. F. (*South Africa.*)
For Valour. Outspan. July 6, '28.
RUDD, STEELE. (*Australia.*)
Letter Under the Mirror. Bulletin (Sydney). Mar. 21, '28.
SMITH, PAULINE. (*South Africa.*)
Desolation. Outspan. Oct. 12, '28.
Woman's Journal. July, '28.
VAN DER POST, LAURENS. (*South Africa.*)
Turn of the Tide. Outspan. Oct. 12, '28.
WELLS, A. W. (*South Africa.*)
Pioneer. Outspan. July 13, '28.
"WESTON, NORMAN." *See* FLATHER, H.
WHARTON, ALGERNON. (*Trinidad.*)
Lai John. London Mercury. Jan., '29.

# ARTICLES ON THE SHORT STORY IN BRITISH AND IRISH PERIODICALS

## JUNE 1, 1928, TO MAY 31, 1929

Acton, Harold.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. July 26, '28. (27:553.)
Adams, Edward C. L.
Anonymous. Dublin Magazine. Jan.–Mar., '29. (4:69.)
By Padraic Colum. Dublin Magazine. July–Sept., '28. (3:82.)
Aiken, Conrad.
Anonymous. New Statesman. May 4, '29. (Suppl., x.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr. 18, '29. (28:312.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. May 19, '29. (6.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). Apr. 20, '29. (147:543.)
By Thomas Moult. Manchester Guardian. May 17, '29. (9.).
By D. R. Irish Statesman. Apr. 20, '29. (12:137.)
By R. Ellis Roberts. Daily News. Apr. 24, '29. (4.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Apr. 27, '29. (662.)
American Short Story.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jan. 3, '29. (28:8.)
By Vera Brittain. Time and Tide. Dec. 21, '28. (9:1256.)
By Gerald Gould. Daily News. Dec. 10, '28. (4.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). Dec. 29, '28. (146:881.)
By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. Nov. 30, '28. (7.)
By P. S. O'H. Irish Statesman. July 7, '28. (10:357.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Dec. 1, '28. (828.)
Andersen, Hans Christian.
By M. S. P. Dublin Magazine. July–Sept., '28. (3:63.)
Armstrong, Martin.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 29, '28. (27: 933.)
By Francis Birrell. Nation and Athenæum. Nov. 17, '28. (44: 259.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Nov. 25, '28. (7.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Dec. 22, '28. (967.)
Arnold, Vértessy.
Anonymous. Manchester Guardian. May 24, '29. (7.)

Aumonier, Stacy.
Anonymous obituary notices in all British newspapers. Dec. 27, '28.
By G. G. Observer. Dec. 30, '28. (9.)
Austin, F. Britten.
Anonymous. Saturday Review (London). June 30, '28. (145: 844.)
By A. R. Bookman (London). May, '29. (76:136.)
By A. de S. Manchester Guardian. May 31, '29. (7.)
By Beatrice Kean Seymour. Woman's Journal. July, '28. (66.)
By F. E. Whitton. Bookman (London). June, '28. (74:167.)
Australian Short Story.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 20, '28. (27: 1006.)
By F. R. Manchester Guardian. Oct. 19, '28. (7.)
Babel, I.
Anonymous. New Statesman. May 4, '29. (Suppl., x.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Aug. 2, '28. (27: 567.)
By Vera Brittain. Time and Tide. Apr. 19, '29. (10:461.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. May 19, '29. (6.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review. Apr. 27, '29. (147:581.)
By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. May 3, '29. (7.)
By R. Ellis Roberts. Daily News. May 22, '29. (6.)
Bacchelli, Riccardo.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 13, '28. (27:989.)
Bailey, H. C.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Mar. 21, '29. (28: 244.)
Balfour-Browne, E. M. C.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Sept. 13, '28. (27: 649.)
Balzac, Honoré de.
By James Agate. Saturday Review (London). Jan. 12, '29. (147:47.)
Anonymous. New Statesman. Feb. 9, '29. (32:576.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr. 11, '29. (28:290.)
By Arnold Bennett. Evening Standard. Jan. 10, '29. (7.) Apr. 18, 29. (9.)
By Theodora Bosanquet. Time and Tide. Apr. 12, '29. (10: 430.)
By P. H. Queen. Jan. 16, '29. (12.)
By W. H. Helm. Daily News. Jan. 10, '29. (4.)
By Desmond MacCarthy. Sunday Times. Mar. 10, '29. (8.)

By Edwin Muir. Nation and Athenæum. Mar. 9, '29. (44:792.)
By Herbert Vivian. T. P.'s Weekly. Oct. 6, '28. (10:713.)
By H. D. Ziman. John o'London's Weekly. Jan. 26, '29. (20: 586.)

Barcynska, Countess.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Mar. 28, '29. (28: 262.)

Barnes, Margaret Ayer.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 2, '29. (28: 364.)
By Vera Brittain. Time and Tide. Apr. 19, '29. (10:461.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). Apr. 20, '29. (147:543.)

Bartlett, Vernon.

By Gerald Gould. Daily News. Mar. 18, '29. (4.)
By A. de S. Manchester Guardian. Apr. 12, '29. (7.)

Bates, H. E.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. July 5, '28. (27:506.)
By Mary Arden. New Adelphi. Sept., '28. (2:89.)
By Cyril Connolly. New Statesman. July 21, '28. (31:484.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Aug. 5, '28. (5.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). June 23, '28. (145:810.)
By Sylvia Lynd. Time and Tide. June 22, '28. (9:607.)
By Raymond Mortimer. Nation and Athenæum. June 9, '28. (43:332.)
By F. S. Manchester Guardian. June 22, '28. (7.)
By Beatrice Kean Seymour. Woman's Journal. Sept., '28. (62.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. July 14, '28. (60.)

Beach, Rex.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jan. 31, '29. (28:81.)

Beerbohm, Max.

By Hugh I'Anson Fausset. Manchester Guardian. Dec. 21, '28. (7.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Nov. 18, '28. (8.)
By John Ingram. T. P.'s Weekly. Feb. 16, '29. (11:507.)
By B. L. Saturday Review (London). Aug. 11, '28. (146:183.)
By Robert Lynd. Daily News. Nov. 9, '28. (4.) John o'London's Weekly. Apr. 27, '29. (21:78.)
By Desmond MacCarthy. Sunday Times. Dec. 9, '28. (8.)
By Moray McLaren. London Mercury. May, '29. (20:90.)
By R. Ellis Roberts. New Statesman. Dec. 1, '28. (Suppl., xxii.)
By M. Robinson. New Adelphi. Mar.–May, '29. (2:273.)
By Beatrice Kean Seymour. Woman's Journal. Mar., '29. (60.)

By "Stet." Saturday Review (London). Dec. 15, '28. (146:817.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Dec. 1, '28. (828.)

Benefield, Barry.
Anonymous. Bookman (London). Aug., '28. (74:277).

Benson, Stella.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 20, '28. (27: 1009.)
By A. M. Manchester Guardian. Feb. 5, '29. (7.)
By V. Sackville-West. Nation and Athenæum. Dec. 15, '28. (44:416.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Dec. 22, '28. (967.)

Bickerstaff, George.
Anonymous. English Review. Feb., '29. (48:239.)
Anonymous. New Statesman. Nov. 3, '28. (Suppl., xvi.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Sept. 27, '28. (27: 685.)
By C. F. K. Manchester Guardian. Nov. 2, '28. (5.)

Bierce, Ambrose.
By Vincent O'Sullivan. Dublin Magazine. Apr.–June, '29. (48.)

Bottome, Phyllis.
Anonymous. Daily News. July 24, '28. (4.)
Anonymous. Nation and Athenæum. Aug. 18, '28. (43:656.)
Anonymous. New Statesman. Aug. 4, '28. (31:546.)
Anonymous. Spectator. Aug. 4, '28. (171.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Aug. 23, '28. (27: 606.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). Aug. 11, '28. (146: 187.)
By Amber Reeves. Queen. Aug. 15, '28. (6.)

Bowen, Marjorie.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Feb. 28, '29. (28: 164.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Feb. 17, '29. (8.)
By D. R. Irish Statesman. Mar. 2, '29. (11:519.)

Bramah, Ernest.
Anonymous. Bookman (London). July, '28. (74:231.)
Anonymous. English Review. June, '28. (46:742.)
By Clemence Dane. Good Housekeeping (London). Aug., '28. (48.)
By Thomas Moult. Manchester Guardian. June 1, '28. (5.)
By Clara Smith. Time and Tide. June 15, '28. (9:581.)

British Short Story.
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). Nov. 3, '28. (146:582.)

By P. S. O'H. Irish Statesman. July 7, '28. (10:357.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Oct. 13, '28. (498.)
By A. S. W. Manchester Guardian. Dec. 7, '28. (7.)
By C. Henry Warren. Bookman (London). Feb., '29. (75: 294.)

Bromfield, Louis.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 16, '29. (28: 400.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. May 26, '29. (8.)
By I. H. Irish Statesman. May 11, '29. (12:198.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). May 4, '29. (147: 620.)
By Lyn Ll. Irvine. Nation and Athenæum. May 11, '29. (45: 206.)
By Sylvia Lynd. Time and Tide. May 17, '29. (10:593.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. May 4, '29. (705.)

Browne, K. R. G.
By Louis J. McQuilland. Bookman (London). Aug., '28. (74: 262.)

Buchan, John.
Anonymous. Bookman (London). Aug., '28. (74:277.)
Anonymous. Daily News. July 12, '28. (4.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. July 12, '28. (27:518.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Aug. 19, '28. (5.)
By R. B. L. Manchester Guardian. Aug. 3, '28. (5.)
By Raymond Mortimer. Nation and Athenæum. July 28, '28. (43:564.)
By Clara Smith. Time and Tide. Aug. 24, '28. (9:978.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. July 4, '28. (60.)

Bullett, Gerald.
Anonymous. Daily News. July 31, '28. (4.)
By H. B. Manchester Guardian. June 8, '28. (7.)
By Vera Brittain. Time and Tide. June 1, '28. (9:534.)
By Clemence Dane. Good Housekeeping (London). Aug., '28. (48.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. July 8, '28. (8.)
By G. W. K. New Statesman. June 2, '28. (31:259.)
By C. Henry Warren. Bookman (London). Aug., '28. (74:269.)

Burdett, Osbert.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 23, '29. (28: 418.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). May 25, '29. (147:716.)
By B. S. Manchester Guardian. May 31, '29. (7.)

Burrage, A. M.
By J. A. T. Lloyd. Fortnightly Review. July, '28. (124:144.)
Byrne, Donn.
Anonymous. Dublin Magazine. Jan.–Mar., '29. (4:72.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Oct. 4, '28. (27:706.)
By Shan Bullock. Bookman (London). May, '29. (76:131.)
By Austin Clarke. T. P.'s Weekly. Sept. 22, '28. (10:655.)
By Mary Crosbie. Observer. Nov. 4, '28. (8.)
By Winifred Holtby. Time and Tide. Sept. 28, '28. (9:895.)
By Shane Leslie. Outlook (London). June 23, '28. (61:781.)
By C. M. Bookman (London). Nov., '28. (75:124.)
By Andrew E. Malone. Dublin Magazine. Oct.–Dec., '28. (21.)
By S. Paull Tabb. Daily News. Oct. 23, '28. (4.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Sept. 15, '28. (338.)
Cabell, James Branch.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. July 26, '28. (27:550.) Nov. 15, '28. (27:854.)
By Vera Brittain. Time and Tide. Nov. 16, '28. (9:1109.)
By A. E. Coppard. Manchester Guardian. Aug. 3, '28. (5.) Mar. 28, '29. (7.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Nov. 11, '28. (8.) Daily News. Nov. 12, '28. (4.)
By A. M. Manchester Guardian. Nov. 23, '28. (7.)
By Amber Reeves. Queen. Sept. 19, '28. (6.)
By Clara Smith. Time and Tide. Aug. 17, '28. (9:781.)
Cable, George W.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 20, '28. (27:1010.)
Canadian Short Story.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 2, '29. (28:364.)
By A. E. Coppard. Manchester Guardian. May 17, '29. (9.)
Cather, Willa.
By Clemence Dane. Good Housekeeping (London). Aug., '28. (48.)
By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. June 15, '28. (7.)
By Beatrice Kean Seymour. Woman's Journal. July, '28. (66.)
By Edward Shanks. London Mercury. June, '28. (18:206.)
By S. Paull Tabb. Daily News. June 6, '28. (4.)
Chekhov, Anton.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. June 14, '28. (27:451.)
Chesterton, G. K.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 29, '28. (27:933.)

By Francis Birrell. Nation and Athenæum. Nov. 17, '28. (44: 259.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Nov. 25, '28. (7.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Dec. 22, '28. (967.)
Clifford, Sir Hugh.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jan. 24, '29. (28:55.)
By A. E. Coppard. Manchester Guardian. Feb. 15, '29. (7.)
By Leopold Spero. New Age. Jan. 31, '29. (44:167.)
Clifford, Mrs. W. K.
By T. P. O'Connor. T. P.'s Weekly. May 11, '29. (12:76.)
Colonial Short Story.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 9, '29. (28:387.)
Conrad, Joseph.
By "Affable Hawk." New Statesman. Dec. 8, '28. (32:290.)
Anonymous. Daily News. Oct. 22, '28. (4.)
Anonymous. Nation and Athenæum. Dec. 22, '28. (44:449.)
Anonymous. Observer. Oct. 21, '28. (7.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. June 28, '28. (27: 483.) Sept. 13, '28. (27:641.)
By Hugh P. Austin. Fortnightly Review. Sept., '28. (124:376.)
By I. B. Manchester Guardian. June 20, '28. (7.)
By Arnold Bennett. Evening Standard. July 5, '28. (7.)
By Thomas Carr. Spectator. Oct. 27, '28. (581.)
By Richard Church. Spectator. July 7, '28. (23.) Sept. 22, '28. (374.)
By F. G. Cooper. John o'London's Weekly. Aug. 25, '28. (19: 641.)
By Ernest Dawson. Fortnightly Review. Aug., '28. (124:203.)
By F. N. Doubleday. World Today. July, '28. (52:145.)
By Robin Douglas. Cornhill Magazine. Jan., '29. (66:20.)
By T. Arch. Dukes. Spectator. Oct. 20, '28. (526.)
By Hugh I'Anson Fausset. Manchester Guardian. Nov. 19, '28. (7.)
By Monica Gardner. Slavonic Review. June, '28. (7:224.)
By Edward Garnett. Manchester Guardian. Oct. 1, '28. (5.)
By Barrington Gates. Nation and Athenæum. July 7, '28. (43: 464.)
By E. E. Kellett. New Statesman. Dec. 15, '28. (32:329.)
By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian Weekly. June 29, '28. (512.)
By John Wyld Pitcailor. Spectator. Jan. 19, '29. (85.)
By Morley Roberts. John o'London's Weekly. July 28, '28. (19:509.)
By R. Ellis Roberts. Daily News. Sept. 11, '28. (4.)
By George Sampson. Bookman (London). Oct., '28. (75:8.)

By J. C. Squire. Observer. Sept. 2, '28. (4.)
By Andrew de Tennant. New Statesman. July 28, '28. (31:511.)

Coppard, A. E.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Oct. 11, '28. (27:730.)
By J. B. Chapman. Bookman (London). Oct., '28. (75:38.)
By Hugh I'Anson Fausset. Manchester Guardian. Oct. 12, '28. (7.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). Oct. 13, '28. (146:477.)
By F. Heath. Bermondsey Book. Dec., '28–Feb., '29. (6:99.)
By Horace Horsnell. Observer. Oct. 14, '28. (8.)
By D. R. Irish Statesman. Oct. 13, '28. (11:117.)
By Clara Smith. Time and Tide. Nov. 2, '28. (9:1044.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Oct. 13, '28. (498.)
By C. Henry Warren. Bookman (London). Apr., '29. (76:36.)
By T. Earle Welby. Daily News. Nov. 1, '28. (4.)

Corvo, Frederick Baron.
By A. J. A. Symons. Life and Letters. July, '28. (1:81.)

Crane, Stephen.
By Solon S. Bloom. Bermondsey Book. Mar.–May, '29. (46.)

Crivelli, Riccardo Balsamo.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. July 5, '28. (27:500.)

Crompton, Richmal.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Aug. 30, '28. (27:618.)

Czechoslovak Short Story.
Anonymous. Observer. Feb. 24, '29. (6.)

De La Mare, Walter.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 30, '29. (28:433.)
By Hugh I'Anson Fausset. Manchester Guardian. May 21, '29. (5.)
By Edward Shanks. Saturday Review (London). May 18, '29. (147:678.)
By S. Paull Tabb. Daily News. May, '29. (4.)

Delafield, E. M.
Anonymous. Daily News. May 7, '29. (7.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 9, '29. (28:380.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Apr. 28, '29. (8.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). May 4, '29. (147:620.)
By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. May 24, '29. (7.)
By Clara Smith. Time and Tide. Apr. 26, '29. (10:493.)
By Ralph Straus. Sunday Times. Apr. 21, '29. (9.)

Denison, Corrie.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 27, '28. (27: 1026.)
By Mary Agnes Hamilton. Time and Tide. Jan. 11, '29. (10: 39.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). Jan. 12, '29. (147:51.)
By Lyn Ll. Irvine. Nation and Athenæum. Jan. 19, '29. (44: 556.)
By A. M. Manchester Guardian. Dec. 21, '28. (7.)
Detective Stories.
Anonymous. New Statesman. Apr. 27, '29. (33:88.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Apr. 21, '29. (8.)
By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. May 3, '29. (7.)
Dorat, Claude-Joseph.
Anonymous. New Statesman. Aug. 11, '28. (31:570.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Sept. 6, '28. (27: 630.)
Dostoevsky, Fyodor.
Anonymous. Saturday Review (London). Dec. 15, '28. (146: 820.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 20, '28. (27: 997.)
By W. L. Blennerhassett. Cornhill Magazine. Dec., '28. (65: 730.)
By E. C. Spectator. Mar. 16, '29. (415.)
By John Cournos. T. P.'s Weekly. Jan. 5, '29. (11:334.)
By John Freeman. London Mercury. June, '28. (18:212.)
Dec., '28. (19:176.)
By W. R. Gordon. Daily News. Nov. 12, '28. (4.)
By Prince D. S. Mirsky. Observer. July 22, '28. (6.) Jan. 20, '29. (7.)
By Neil Montgomery. New Age. Nov. 29, '28. (44:54.)
By H. L. Morrow. John o'London's Weekly. Dec. 1, '28. (20: 297.)
By P. S. O'H. Irish Statesman. Feb. 2, '29. (11:441.)
By Alan Porter. Spectator. Dec. 1, '28. (823.)
By Leonard Woolf. Nation and Athenæum. Nov. 24, '28. (44: 294.)
Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan.
By T. S. Eliot. Criterion. Apr., '29. (8:552.)
By E. V. Knox. Daily News. Oct. 24, '28. (4.)
By Edward Shanks. John o'London's Weekly. Nov. 17, '28. (20:222.)

Dreiser, Theodore.
By Thomas Burke. T. P.'s Weekly. June 9, '28. (10:208.)
By Martin Gilkes. New Adelphi. Dec., '28–Feb., '29. (2:178.)
Dudeney, Mrs. Henry.
Anonymous. Bookman (London). Dec., '28. (75:211.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Oct. 18, '28. (27: 761.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Dec. 30, '28. (6.)
By C. F. K. Manchester Guardian. Nov. 9, '28. (7.)
Edwards, A. Cecil.
Anonymous. New Statesman. July 7, '28. (31:430.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. July 26, '28. (27: 554.)
By J. A. T. Lloyd. Fortnightly Review. July, '28. (124:143.)
By E. T. Manchester Guardian. June 22, '28. (7.)
Ervine, St. John.
Anonymous. New Statesman. June 2, '28. (31:268.)
By Clemence Dane. Good Housekeeping (London). Aug., '28. (48.)
By Dilys Powell. Sunday Times. June 24, '28. (10.)
By Hugh Walpole. Nash's Magazine. Oct., '28. (10.)
"Estore."
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 27, '28. (27: 1026.)
Farnol, Jeffery.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr. 25, '29. (28: 341.)
Fayard, Jean.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jan. 3, '29. (28:10.)
Flaubert, Gustave.
Anonymous. T. P.'s Weekly. July 28, '28. (10:416.)
By Holbrook Jackson. Bookman (London). Dec., '28. (75:202.)
Fletcher, J. S.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 1, '28. (27:808.)
Footner, Hulbert.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jan. 17, '29. (28:46.)
Forbes, Rosita.
Anonymous. New Statesman. July 14, '28. (31:460.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. June 2, '28. (844.)
Forster, E. M.
Anonymous. Life and Letters. June, '28. (1:70.)
By Clemence Dane. Good Housekeeping (London). Aug., '28. (48.)
By Frederick Heath. Bermondsey Book. June–Aug., '28. (85.)
By Dilys Powell. Sunday Times. June 24, '28. (10.)

By Beatrice Kean Seymour. Woman's Journal. July, '28. (66.)
By Alfred Tresidder Sheppard. Everyman. May 16, '29. (6.)

France, Anatole.

By "Affable Hawk." New Statesman. Dec. 29, '28. (32:385.)
Anonymous. John o'London's Weekly. Aug. 11, '28. (19:577.)
Anonymous. Life and Letters. Sept., '28. (1:314.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Mar. 21, '29. (28: 223.)
By Robert Dell. Nation and Athenæum. Sept. 29, '28. (43:815.)
By Nevin H. Foster. T. P.'s Weekly. Aug. 4, '28. (10:452.)
By John Freeman. London Mercury. Feb., '29. (19:431.)
By Magdalen King-Hall. Spectator. Oct. 20, '28. (537.)
By Desmond MacCarthy. New Statesman. July 28, '28. (31: 515.) Sunday Times. Oct. 7, '28. (8.)
By Moray McLaren. London Mercury. June, '28. (18:209.)
By H. L. Morrow. Daily News. July 19, '28. (4.)
By Henry Murray. Sunday Times. July 22, '28. (8.)
By Sylva Norman. Nation and Athenæum. Sept. 1, '28. (43: 707.)
By T. P. O'Connor. T. P.'s Weekly. Aug. 18, '28. (10:503.) Nov. 3, '28. (11:49.)
By D. P. Bookman (London). Sept., '28. (74:311.)
By Amber Reeves. Queen. Aug. 15, '28. (6.)
By K. Ellis Roberts. Observer. Aug. 5, '28. (5.)

Frank, Bruno.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr. 18, '29. (xx.)
By Gerald Gould. Daily News. Mar. 18, '29. (4.)
By Mary Agnes Hamilton. Time and Tide. Mar. 15, '29. (10: 299.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). Mar. 23, '29. (147:410.)
By Lyn Ll. Irvine. Nation and Athenæum. Mar. 16, '29. (44: 844.)
By B. S. Manchester Guardian. Mar. 28, '29. (7.)
By Humbert Wolfe. Observer. Apr. 14, '29. (7.)

Frank Leonhard.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr. 18, '29. (xx.)
By Mary Agnes Hamilton. Time and Tide. Mar. 29, '29. (10: 370.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). Mar. 23, '29. (147:410.)
By J. A. T. Lloyd. T. P.'s Weekly. Apr. 13, '29. (11:747.)
By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. Mar. 22, '29. (7.)
By G. W. S. New Statesman. Apr. 13, '29. (33:15.)

By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Mar. 23, '29. (485.)
By Humbert Wolfe. Observer. Apr. 21, '29. (7.)
Fraser, William C.,
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jan. 24, '29. (28:65.)
French Short Story.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Sept. 13, '28. (27: 644.)
Galsworthy, John.
By St. John Adcock. Sunday Times. Apr. 28, '29. (10.)
By Robert Lynd. John o'London's Weekly. Dec. 8, '28. (Supplement.)
By Edward Shanks. John o'London's Weekly. Dec. 8, '28. (Supplement.)
By Frank Swinnerton. Bookman (London). Dec., '28. (75:147.)
Garnett, David.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 20, '28. (27: 1009.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Dec. 9, '28. (7.)
By A. M. Manchester Guardian. Feb. 5, '29. (7.)
By V. Sackville-West. Nation and Athenæum. Dec. 15, '28. (44:416.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Dec. 22, '28. (967.)
German Short Story.
Anonymous. Nation and Athenæum. Apr. 20, '29. (45:82.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr. 4, '29. (28:272.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Mar. 23, '29. (485.)
By F. A. V. Manchester Guardian. May 24, '29. (7.)
Gissing, George.
By Richard Church. Spectator. Feb. 16, '29. (240.)
By R. M. F. Irish Statesman. Mar. 16, '29. (12:38.)
By Ellen Gissing. Blackwood's Magazine. May, '29. (225:653.)
By Desmond MacCarthy. Sunday Times. Feb. 17, '29. (8.)
By Hamish Miles. New Statesman. Apr. 13, '29. (33:12.)
By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. Mar. 8, '29. (7.)
By Edwin Muir. Nation and Athenæum. May 4, '29. (45:163.)
By R. Ellis Roberts. Daily News. Feb. 13, '29. (4.)
By Arthur Waugh. Bookman (London). Apr., '29. (76:9.)
By T. Earle Welby. Saturday Review (London). Feb. 9, '29. (147:181.)
Gobineau, Comte Arthur de.
By Arnold Bennett. Evening Standard. May 23, '29. (5.)
Gogol, Nikolay.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 29, '28. (27: 930.)

By Cyril Connolly. New Statesman. Jan. 19, '29. (32:470.)
By Gerald Gould. Daily News. Nov. 26, '28. (4.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). Dec. 15, '28. (146:824.)
By T. P. O'Connor. T. P.'s Weekly. Jan 12, '29. (11:368.)
By M. Robinson. New Adelphi. Mar.–May, '29. (2:273.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Dec. 1, '28. (828.)
By Leonard Woolf. Nation and Athenæum. Feb. 9, '29. (44: 654.)

Green, Julien.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr. 11, '29. (28: 293.)

Green, Paul.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Feb. 14, '29. (28: 120.)
By Vera Brittain. Time and Tide. Feb. 1, '29. (10:115.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Feb. 3, '29. (8.)
By Lyn Ll. Irvine. Nation and Athenæum. Feb. 16, '29. (44: 690.)
By D. R. Irish Statesman. Feb. 16, '29. (11:481.)
By A. de S. Manchester Guardian. Feb. 22, '29. (7.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Feb. 2, '29. (169.)

Greene, L. Patrick.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. July 12, '28. (27:521.)

Hardy, Thomas.
By "Affable Hawk." New Statesman. Jan. 26, '29. (32:498.)
Anonymous. New Statesman. Dec. 1, '28. (Suppl., ix.)
Anonymous. Saturday Review (London). Jan. 26, '29. (147: 112.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Aug. 9, '28. (27: 584.) Nov. 8, '28. (27:827.)
By C. K. B. John o'London's Weekly. Nov. 24, '28. (20:256.)
By Sir J. M. Barrie. Manchester Guardian. Nov. 29, '28. (14.)
By Theodora Bosanquet. Time and Tide. Nov. 16, '28. (9: 1107.)
By H. B. C. Manchester Guardian. Nov. 5, '28. (5.)
By Sidney Dark. T. P.'s Weekly. Mar. 2, '29. (11:559.)
By John Freeman. London Mercury. Feb., '29. (19:400.)
By Wilfrid Gibson. Bookman (London). June, '28. (74:148.)
By A. D. Gristwood. Everyman. May 2, '29. (24.)
By Frederick Heath. Bermondsey Book. Dec., '28–Feb., '29. (6: 97.)
By Dom David Knowles. Dublin Review. Oct., '28. (183:208.)
By Desmond MacCarthy. Sunday Times. Nov. 4, '28. (8.) New Statesman. Nov. 10, '28. (32:156.)

By F. McG. Studies. Sept., '28. (17:504.)
By Prince D. S. Mirsky. London Mercury. Feb., '29. (19:446.)
By H. L. Morrow. Bookman (London). Jan., '29. (75:246.)
By J. Middleton Murry. New Adelphi. Dec., '28–Feb., '29. (2: 163.)
By W. M. Parker. Cornhill. Feb., '29. (65:149.)
By Oliver Scribe. T. P.'s Weekly. Nov. 24, '28. (11:119.)
By John Shand. New Age. Dec. 6, '28. (44:66.)
By J. C. Squire. Observer. Nov. 11, '28. (6.)
By Hugh Walpole. Spectator. Nov. 3, '28. (657.)
By Virginia Woolf. Nation and Athenæum. Nov. 24, '28. (44: 289.)
By W. Worster. Bookman (London). July, '28. (74:220.)

Harte, Francis Bret.
By "Stet." Saturday Review (London). June 16, '28. (145:771.)

Harvey, H. E.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 29, '28. (27: 927.)

Harvey, William Fryer.
Anonymous. Criterion. Sept., '28. (8:175.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. June 14, '28. (27: 453.)
By H. C. Harwood. Outlook (London). June 2, '28. (61:687.)
By D. R. Irish Statesman. June 30, '28. (10:333.)
By Ralph Straus. Sunday Times. June 17, '28. (9.)

Hawthorne, Nathaniel.
By Augustine Birrell. Life and Letters. July, '28. (1:102.)
By John Freeman. London Mercury. June, '28. (18:212.)

Hemingway, Ernest.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. June 14, '28. (27: 448.)
By Sylvia Lynd. Daily News. June 7, '28. (4.) Time and Tide. June 22, '28. (9:607.) T. P.'s Weekly. July 28, '28. (10:429.)
By Elsie Elizabeth Phare. Experiment. May, '29. (13.)

"Henry, O."
Anonymous. T. P.'s Weekly. Jan. 5, '29. (11:330.)

Hergesheimer, Joseph.
Anonymous. New Statesman. Oct. 6, '28. (31:806.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Sept. 27, '28. (27: 685.)
By Arnold Bennett. Evening Standard. Nov. 1, '28. (9.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). Oct. 6, '28. (146:438.)

By Sylvia Lynd. Time and Tide. Oct. 19, '28. (9:976.)
By Henry Albert Phillips. World Today. July, '28. (52:151.)
By F. S. Manchester Guardian. Sept. 28, '28. (7.)
By L. S. New Age. Oct. 25, '28. (43:310.)
By H. C. Tracy. New Adelphi. Dec., '28–Feb., '29. (2:182.)

Hichens, Robert.
Anonymous. New Statesman. July 14, '28. (31:460.)
By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. June 1, '28. (5.)
By S. Paull Tabb. Daily News. July 17, '28. (4.)
By C. Henry Warren. Bookman (London). Aug., '28. (74:269.)

Hogan, David.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jan. 10, '29. (28:29.)
By C. H. Dublin Magazine. Jan.–Mar., '29. (4:65.)
By Y. O. Irish Statesman. Jan. 5, '29. (11:360.)

Hogan, Patrick.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 15, '28. (27: 861.)

Holme, Constance.
By Daphne Clare. Evening Standard. July 26, '28. (18.)

Hoult, Norah.
Anonymous. Daily News. July 25, '28. (4.)
Anonymous. Spectator. Aug. 11, '28. (199.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Aug. 23, '28. (27: 604.)
By Cyril Connolly. New Statesman. Aug. 18, '28. (31:591.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Aug. 26, '28. (5.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). July 14, '28. (146:54.)
By Raymond Mortimer. Nation and Athenæum. July 28, '28. (43:564.)
By Dilys Powell. Sunday Times. Aug. 26, '28. (7.)
By D. R. Irish Statesman. July 14, '28. (10:372.)
By Clara Smith. Time and Tide. July 27, '28. (9:726.)

Humphreys, Mrs. Desmond. *See* "Rita."

Hutchinson, Vere.
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). June 30, '28. (145:842.)
By C. Henry Warren. Bookman (London). Aug., '28. (74: 269.)

Huxley, Aldous.
By P. H. Everyman. Feb. 7, '29. (6.)

Istrati, Panaït.
By Tristan Rémy. Bermondsey Book. June–Aug., '28. (60.)

Ivanov, Vsevolod.
Anonymous. John o'London's Weekly. Aug. 18, '28. (19:602.)
Jacks, L. P.
Anonymous. Everyman. Apr. 25, '29. (6.)
James, Henry.
By "Affable Hawk." New Statesman. Jan. 26, '29. (32:498.)
By John Freeman. London Mercury. June, '28. (18:212.)
Jenkins, Herbert.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 20, '28. (27:1013.)
Jordan, Humfrey.
Anonymous. Manchester Guardian. Feb. 22, '29. (7.)
Joyce, James.
By R. M. Fox. Irish Statesman. Dec. 8, '28. (11:272.)
Kaye-Smith, Sheila.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 29, '28. (27:933.)
By Francis Birrell. Nation and Athenæum. Nov. 17, '28. (44:259.)
By Marion Ryan. Woman's Journal. Nov., '28. (40.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Dec. 22, '28. (967.)
Keller, Gottfried.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 2, '29. (28:357.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. May 25, '29. (833.)
Kennedy, Margaret.
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Oct. 27, '28. (602.)
Kernahan, Mrs. Coulson.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 23, '29. (28:422.)
Kessel, J.
Anonymous. Life and Letters. Aug., '28. (1:223.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. July 5, '28. (27:506.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. June 10, '28. (8.) Daily News. June 11, '28. (4.)
By "Lydia Languish." John o'London's Weekly. July 21, 28. (19:487.)
By Raymond Mortimer. Nation and Athenæum. June 9, '28. (43:332.)
By Beatrice Kean Seymour. Woman's Journal. Sept., '28. (62.)
By Max Temple. Queen. June 20, '28. (4.)
Kipling, Rudyard.
By Gilbert Frankau. London Magazine. Aug., '28. (61:130.)
By "Stet." Saturday Review (London). Dec. 1, '28. (146:727.)
Langbridge, Rosamond.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 2, '29. (28:364.)

By Hon. Mrs. Robert Hamilton. Sunday Times. May 19, '29. (7.)
By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. Apr. 12, '29. (7.)
By R. Ellis Roberts. Daily News. May 22, '29. (6.)

Lardner, Ring W.

By Francis Birrell. Nation and Athenæum. Oct. 6, '28. (44:19.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Sept. 9, '28. (6.)
By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. Sept. 28, '28. (7.)
By Amber Reeves. Queen. Sept. 19, '28. (6.)

Lawrence, D. H.

Anonymous. Life and Letters. Aug., '28. (1:221.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Mar. 21, '29. (28: 240.)
By Arnold Bennett. Evening Standard. June 7, '28. (7.)
By J. S. Collis. Bermondsey Book. Dec., '28–Feb., '29. (6:13.)
By Bonamy Dobrée. Criterion. Sept., '28. (8:139.)
By Gerald Gould. Daily News. June 4, '28. (4.) Observer. June 10, '28. (8.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). June 2, '28. (145: 706.)
By Philip Henderson. Everyman. Apr. 25, '29. (15.)
By G. W. K. New Statesman. June 2, '28. (31:259.)
By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. June 29, '28. (7.)
By Raymond Mortimer. Nation and Athenæum. June 9, '28. (43:332.)
By Amber Reeves. Queen. June 27, '28. (6.)
By Edward Shanks. London Mercury. Aug., '28. (18:437.)
By Clara Smith. Time and Tide. June 15, '28. (9:581.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. June 2, '28. (844.) Mar. 23, '29. (485.)

Loria, Arturo.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. July 5, '28. (27: 500.)

Loti, Pierre.

By John Mifsud. New Statesman. July 14, '28. (31:449.)

Mackail, Denis.

Anonymous. Bookman (London). July, '28. (74:232.)
Anonymous. Time and Tide. July 6, '28. (9:659.)
By B. I. E. Manchester Guardian. June 15, '28. (7.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). June 2, '28. (145:706.)
By Ralph Straus. Sunday Times. June 17, '28. (9.)

Mackenna, William Robert.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. June 7, '28. (27:432.)
MacMahon, Ella.
By Katharine Tynan. Bookman (London). Aug., '28. (74:265.)
Maginn, William.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 15, '28. (27: 863.)
By Michael Sadleir. Observer. May 19, '29. (6.)
Manhood, H. A.
Anonymous. New Statesman. July 7, '28. (31:434.)
By Mary Arden. New Adelphi. Sept., '28. (2:89.)
By H. B. Manchester Guardian. Aug. 3, '28. (5.)
By Arnold Bennett. Evening Standard. July 26, '28. (5.)
By Francis Birrell. Nation and Athenæum. June 30, '28. (43: 430.)
By Vera Brittain. Time and Tide. Aug. 10, '28. (9:765.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. June 24, '28. (8.) Daily News. June 25, '28. (4.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). July 14, '28. (146:54.)
By H. C. Harwood. Outlook (London). June 30, '28. (61:819.)
By H. L. Morrow. Queen. July 11, '28. (22.)
By D. R. Irish Statesman. July 7, '28. (10:356.)
By Beatrice Kean Seymour. Woman's Journal. Sept. '28. (62.)
By Ralph Straus. Sunday Times. Aug. 12, '28. (7.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. June 30, '28. (983.)
Mann, Thomas.
Anonymous. English Review. Feb., '29. (48:238.)
By Cyril Connolly. New Statesman. Nov. 3, '28. (32:125.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). Nov. 10, '28. (146:620.)
By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. Nov. 23, '28. (7.)
By Raymond Mortimer. Nation and Athenæum. Nov. 3, '28. 44: 181.)
By Cecil Roberts. Bookman (London). Feb., '29. (75:293.)
By R. Ellis Roberts. Daily News. Oct. 29, '28. (4.)
By Clara Smith. Time and Tide. Dec. 7, '28. (9:1192.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Nov. 3, '28. (666.)
By Humbert Wolfe. Vogue. Dec. 12, '28. (55.)
Mansfield, Katherine.
Anonymous. New Statesman. Nov. 24, '28. (32:226.)
Anonymous. Observer. Nov. 25, '28. (7.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 1, '28. (27: 801.)

By Stella Benson. New Adelphi. Mar.–May, '29. (2:257.)
By Edmund Blunden. Nation and Athenæum. Nov. 24, '28. (44: 296.)
By Richard Church. Spectator. Oct. 27, '28. (597.)
By W. R. Gordon. Daily News. Oct. 25, '28. (4.)
By Sylvia Lynd. Time and Tide. Oct. 26, '28. (9:1010.)
By H. L. Morrow. John o'London's Weekly. Dec. 8, '28. (20: 352.)
By Thomas Moult. Manchester Guardian. Oct. 31, '28. (7.) T. P.'s Weekly. Dec. 1, '28. (11:176.) Bookman (London). Dec., '28. (75:183.)
By Forrest Reid. Irish Statesman. Dec. 8, '28. (11:277.)
By Edith Shackleton. Queen. Oct. 31, '28. (12.)
By Edward Shanks. Saturday Review (London). Oct. 27, '28. (146:542.)
By Orlo Williams. Criterion. Apr., '29. (8:508.)

Marshall, Archibald.
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Sept. 9, '28. (6.) Saturday Review (London). Sept. 8, '28. (146:300.)

Maugham, W. Somerset.
By Clemence Dane. Good Housekeeping (London). Aug. '28. (48.)
By D. H. Lawrence. Vogue. Aug. 8, '28. (35.)

Maupassant, Guy de.
Anonymous. T. P.'s Weekly. July 28, '28. (10:416.)

Maxwell, W. B.
Anonymous. Bookman (London). Apr., '29. (76:40.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Mar. 21, '29. (28: 245.)
By Gerald Gould. Daily News. Mar. 11, '29. (4.) Observer. Mar. 17, '29. (8.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). Mar. 9, '29. (147:326.)
By H. C. Harwood. New Statesman. Mar. 16, '29. (ix.)
By P. J. M. Manchester Guardian. Mar. 22, '29. (7.)

Mendès, Catulle.
Anonymous. Nation and Athenæum. Feb. 23, '29. (44:724.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Feb. 14, '29. (28:114.)
By Gerald Gould. Daily News. Mar. 4, '29. (4.)
By I. O. E. New Age. Mar. 7, '29. (44:226.)

Mérimée, Prosper.
Anonymous. Nation and Athenæum. Mar. 23, '29. (44:890.)

Mitchison, Naomi.
Anonymous. Life and Letters. Aug., '28. (1:230.)
Anonymous. New Statesman. June 23, '28. (31:370.)

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. June 14, '28. (27: 447.)
By Gerald Gould. Daily News. July 16, '28. (4.) Observer. July 22, '28. (8.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). June 23, '28. (145:810.)
By Sheila Kaye-Smith. Vogue. July 11, '28. (53.)
By Sylvia Lynd. Time and Tide. June 22, '28. (9:607.)
By C. M. Manchester Guardian. July 20, '28. (7.)
By Raymond Mortimer. Nation and Athenæum. June 23, '28. (43:396.)
By Amber Reeves. Queen. Aug. 1, '28. (4.)
By Edwards Shanks. London Mercury. Aug., '28. (18:437.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. June 16, '28. (919.)

Montague, C. E.

Anonymous. John o'London's Weekly. June 16, '28. (19:307.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Oct. 25, '28. (27: 778.)
By Vera Brittain. Time and Tide. Oct. 26, '28. (9:1011.)
By Neville Cardus. Observer. June 3, '28. (11.)
By Cyril Connolly. New Statesman. Nov. 17, '28. (32:191.)
By Doris N. Dalglish. New Adelphi. Mar.–May, '29. (2:226.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Nov. 11, '28. (8.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). Nov. 3, '28. (146:582.)
By Frederick Heath. Bermondsey Book. Dec., '28–Feb., '29. (6: 95.
By Raymond Mortimer. Nation and Athenæum. Nov. 3, '28. (44:181.)
By Con O'Leary. T. P.'s Weekly. Dec. 1, '28. (11:181.)
By J. B. Priestley. London Mercury. Aug., '28. (18:381.)
By Amber Reeves. Queen. Dec. 19, '28. (23.)
By M. A. S. Bookman (London). Dec., '28. (75:190.)
By Ralph Straus. Sunday Times. Dec. 9, '28. (9.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Oct. 27, '28. (602.)

Moore, George.

By "Affable Hawk." New Statesman. Jan. 5, '29. (32:411.)
Anonymous. Nation and Athenæum. Feb. 2, '29. (44:626.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 13, '28. (27:984.) Apr. 11, '29. (28:290.)
By Richard Church. Spectator. Dec. 8, '28. (869.)
By John Freeman. Bookman (London). Feb., '29. (75:267.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Nov. 25, '28. (7.)
By Desmond MacCarthy. Sunday Times. Jan. 20, '29. (8.)

Morand, Paul.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Oct. 11, '28. (27:730.)
By Naomi Mitchison. Time and Tide. Mar. 15, '29. (10:298.)
Morton, K. M.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jan. 17, '29. (28:45.)
Moss, Geoffrey.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. June 28, '28. (27: 488.)
By Gerald Gould. Daily News. June 11, '28. (4.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). June 23, '28. (145:810.)
By Ernest Munton. Sunday Times. July 22, '28. (9.)
By Amber Reeves. Queen. July 4, '28. (10.)
By Clara Smith. Time and Tide. June 29, '28. (9:633.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. June 23, '28. (946.)
Mottram, R. H.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 15, '28. (27: 847.) Dec. 20, '28. (27:1009.)
By Vera Brittain. Time and Tide. Nov. 16, '28. (9:1109.)
By A. J. Cummings. Daily News. Nov. 1, '28. (4.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Nov. 11, '28. (8.) Dec. 9, '28. (7.)
By Robert Graves. Nation and Athenæum. Dec. 15, '28. (44: 420.)
By Frederick Heath. Bermondsey Book. Dec., '28–Feb., '29. (6:94.)
By A. M. Manchester Guardian. Feb. 5, '29. (7.)
By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. Nov. 9, '28. (7.)
By Ernest Raymond. Bookman (London). Dec., '28. (75:174.)
By Amber Reeves. Queen. Dec. 19, '28. (23.)
By J. S. New Age. Jan. 24, '29. (44:154.)
By V. Sackville-West. Nation and Athenæum. Dec. 15, '28. (44:416.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Nov. 10, '28. (711.) Dec. 22, '28. (967.)
Mystery Stories.
By Edward Shanks. London Mercury. Oct., '28. (18:654.)
Nichols, Robert.
By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. June 1, '28. (5.)
By Edward Shanks. London Mercury. July, '28. (18:317.)
O Conaire, Padraig.
By P. S. O'H. Irish Statesman. Oct. 20, '28. (11:132.)

O'Flaherty, Liam.
Anonymous. New Statesman. May 4, '29. (Suppl., x.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 2, '29. (28:364.)
By Gerald Gould. Daily News. Apr. 15, '29. (4.) Observer. Apr. 21. '29. (8.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review. (London). May 11, '29. (147:649.)
By C. I-C. Manchester Guardian. May 1, '29. (7.)
By Liam O'Flaherty. T. P.'s Weekly. Oct. 20, '28. (10:756.)
By Clara Smith. Time and Tide. Apr. 26, '29. (10:493.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Apr. 27, '29. (662.)

Onions, Oliver.
Anonymous. Bookman (London). Apr., '29. (76:40.)
Anonymous. New Statesman. May 11, '29. (33:154.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Mar. 14, '29. (28: 204.)
By Vera Brittain. Time and Tide. Mar. 22, '29. (10:338.)
By W. R. Gordon. Daily News. Mar. 21, '29. (4.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Mar. 31, '29. (5.)
By N. M. H. Manchester Guardian. Mar. 28, '29. (7.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). Mar. 30, '29. (147:440.)
By Lyn Ll. Irvine. Nation and Athenæum. Mar. 16, '29. (44:844.)

Oppenheim, E. Phillips.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Sept. 13, '28. (27: 649.) Feb. 14, '29. (28:121.)

Orczy, Baroness.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. June 7, '28. (27:433.) May 30, '29. (28:437.)

Packard, Frank L.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Sept. 27, '28. (27: 689.)

Pain, Barry.
Anonymous. London Mercury. June, '28. (18:123.)

Pearson, Hesketh.
Anonymous. English Review. June, '28. (46:743.)

Penn-Smith, Frank.
Anonymous. Daily News. July 9, '28. (4.)
Anonymous. Life and Letters. June, '28. (1:71.)

Perrin, Alice.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Sept. 20, '28. (27: 668.)

Phillpotts, Eden.
By Thomas Moult. Bookman (London). Sept., '28. (74:290.) T. P's Weekly. Mar. 23, '29. (11:661.)

Plomer, William.
Anonymous. New Statesman. Mar. 16, '29. (32:742.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Mar. 21, '29. (28: 228.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Mar. 10, '29. (8.)
By Sylvia Lynd. Time and Tide. Apr. 5, '29. (10:897.)
By D. R. Irish Statesman. Mar. 2, '29. (11:519.)
By R. Ellis Roberts. Daily News. Mar. 19, '29. (4.)
By V. Sackville-West. Nation and Athenæum. Mar. 9, '29. (44: 788.)

Poe, Edgar Allan.
By J. A. T. Lloyd. Fortnightly Review. June, '28. (123:828.) July, '28. (124:143.) Bookman (London). Nov., '28. (75: 136.)
By E. J. Martin. English Review. Mar., '29. (48:322.)
By A. J. A. Symons. Life and Letters. Mar., '29. (2:163.)

Powell, Sydney Walter.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. June 7, '28. (27:432.)

Powys, T. F.
Anonymous. Manchester Guardian. Oct. 5, '28. (7.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. July 12, '28. (27: 518.) Nov. 15, '28. (27:860.)
By Mary Arden. New Adelphi. Sept., '28. (2:89.)
By Francis Birrell. Nation and Athenæum. Oct. 6, '28. (44:19.) Observer. Oct. 28, '28. (8.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Aug. 26, '28. (5.)
By G. W. K. New Statesman. June 2, '28. (31:259.)
By Raymond Mortimer. Nation and Athenæum. June 9, '28. (43:332.)
By Dilys Powell. Sunday Times. June 24, '28. (10.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Dec. 22, '28. (967.)
By C. Henry Warren. Criterion. June, '28. (7:134.) Bookman (London). Aug., '28. (74:269.)

Pushkin, Alexander.
By "Affable Hawk." New Statesman. Mar. 30, '29. (32:793.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 2, '29. (28:361.)
By Prince D. S. Mirsky. Slavonic Review. June, '28. (7:228.)

Quiller-Couch, Sir Arthur T.
Anonymous. Everyman. May 30, '29. (6.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Aug. 16, '28. (27: 585.)
By W. H. Time and Tide. May 17, '29. (10:594.)
By Hugh A. Law. Irish Statesman. June 16, '28. (10:290.)
By Alfred Tresidder Sheppard. Everyman. May 30, '29. (14.)

Rawlence, Guy.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Aug. 9, '28. (27: 580.)
By H. B. Manchester Guardian. Aug. 10, '28. (5.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Sept. 16, '28. (8.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). Aug. 25, '28. (146:249.)
By Clara Smith. Time and Tide. Aug. 17, '28. (9:781.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Aug. 4, '28. (170.)
Remisov, Alexey.
By Prince D. S. Mirsky. Slavonic Review. Jan., '29. (7:457.)
"Rita." (Mrs. Desmond Humphreys.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Sept. 27, '28. (27: 689.)
Roberts, Morley.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Mar. 21, '29. (28: 233.)
By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. Mar. 22, '29. (7.)
Robey, George.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 23, '29. (28: 422.)
Rosa, G. Titta.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Mar. 7, '29. (28:186.)
Royde-Smith, Naomi.
Anonymous. Bookman (London). Feb., '29. (75:303.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 13, '28. (27: 986.)
By Horace Horsnell. Observer. Oct. 14, '28. (8.)
By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. Oct. 26, '28. (7.)
By M. Robinson. New Adelphi. Mar.–May, '29. (2:273.)
By Beatrice Kean Seymour. Woman's Journal. Mar., '29. (60.)
By Edward Shanks. London Mercury. Jan., '29. (19:321.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Oct. 13, '28. (498.)
Russian Short Story.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr. 11, '29. (28: 290.)
St.-Johnston, T. R.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Sept. 20, '28. (27: 670.)
Salt, Sarah.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Mar. 7, '29. (28: 182.)

By Gerald Gould. Daily News. Oct. 8, '28. (4.) Observer. Oct. 7, '28. (8.)
By Sylvia Lynd. Time and Tide. Oct. 19, '28. (9:976.)
By Raymond Mortimer. Nation and Athenæum. Oct. 20, '28. (44:111.)
By Ralph Straus. Sunday Times. Dec. 9, '28. (9.)
Sarr, Kenneth.
By W. D. Studies. June, '28. (17:333.)
Sayers, Dorothy L.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 6, '28. (27:968.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. Dec. 23, '28. (4.)
By Edward Shanks. London Mercury. Dec., '28. (19:206.)
Seaby, Allen W.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 13, '28. (27: 993.)
"Seamark." (Austin J. Small.)
By Thomas Moult. Bookman (London). Feb., '29. (75:284.)
Serao, Matilde.
By M. Mansfield. Dublin Review. July, '28. (183:30.)
Short Story.
By Austin Harrison. T. P.'s Weekly. Aug. 4, '28. (10:446.)
By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. Apr. 12, '29. (7.)
Small, Austin J. *See* "Seamark."
Smith, Pauline.
By Francis Brett Young. London Mercury. Mar., '29. (19: 507.)
Somerville, E. Œ., *and* Ross, Martin.
By M. Robinson. New Adelphi. June, '28. (1:381.)
By Katharine Tynan. Bookman (London). Aug., '28. (74:265.)
Southon, Arthur E.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. July 26, '28. (27:553.)
Sova, Antonin.
By Arne Novak. Slavonic Review. Jan. 19, '29. (7:418.)
Spanish Short Story.
Anonymous. Saturday Review (London). Sept. 8, '28. (146: 301.)
By William J. Entwistle. Modern Language Review. Jan., '29. (24:95.)
By Shane Leslie. Observer. July 15, '28. (7.)
Springs, Elliott White.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Apr. 4, '29. (28:277.)
Stern, G. B.
By G. B. Stern. T. P.'s Weekly. Apr. 13, '29. (11:738.)

Stevens, James.
By H. B. Manchester Guardian. Jan. 18, '29. (7.)
By Vera Brittain. Time and Tide. Feb. 1, '29. (10:115.)

Stevenson, Robert Louis.
Letter to Professor Baildon. John o'London's Weekly. Apr. 13, '29. (21:9.)

Stevenson, Robert Louis.
Anonymous. T. P.'s Weekly. Nov. 3, '28. (11:30.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. June 24, '28. (8.)
By Robert Lynd. John o'London's Weekly. Mar. 16, '29. (20:816.)
By H. L. Morrow. Daily News. Oct. 18, '28. (4.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. June 9, '28. (877.)
By Angela Thirkell. Observer. Nov. 11, '28. (23.)

Strindberg, August.
By Eskil Sundström. John o'London's Weekly. Apr. 6, '29. (20:921.) Apr. 20, '29. (21:48.)

Sudermann, Hermann.
Anonymous. Manchester Guardian. Nov. 22, '28. (7.)

Tecchi, Bonaventura.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Feb. 7, '29. (28:99.)

Thurston, E. Temple.
By I. H. Irish Statesman. May 18, '29. (12:216.)

Tolstoy, Count Lyof N.
By M. A. Aldanov. Slavonic Review. Jan., '29. (7:482.)
Anonymous. John o'London's Weekly. Mar. 30, '29. (20:897.)
Anonymous. Observer. Sept. 30, '28. (17.)
Anonymous. Saturday Review (London). Dec. 15, '28. (141:820.)
Anonymous. Spectator. Nov. 24, '28. (791.) Mar. 23, '29. (482.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Sept. 6, '28. (27:621.) Dec. 20, '28. (27:997.) Mar. 14, '29. (28:202.)
By John Freeman. London Mercury. Dec., '28. (19:176.)
By Edward Garnett. Manchester Guardian. Nov. 28, '28. (7.) May 6, '29. (7.)
By William Gerhardi. John o'London's Weekly. Aug. 25, '28. (19:628.)
By Maxim Gorky. T. P.'s Weekly. Aug. 25, '28. (10:529.)
By Robert Hichens. English Review. Sept., '28. (47:306.)
By Robert Lynd. Daily News. Jan. 18, '29. (4.)
By Desmond MacCarthy. Sunday Times. Dec. 23, '28. (5.) Mar 31, '29. (6.)
By Aylmer Maude. John o'London's Weekly. Aug. 25, '28. (19:625.) T. P.'s Weekly. Sept. 1, '28. (10:567.) Spectator.

Sept. 1, '28. (259.) Fortnightly Review. Sept., '28. (124: 325.) Slavonic Review. Jan., '29. (7:475.) Sunday Times. Apr. 7, '29. (5.)

By Prince D. S. Mirsky. Slavonic Review. June, '28. (7:77.) Observer. Jan. 20, '29. (7.) Slavonic Review. Jan., '29. (7:571.)

By H. L. Morrow. Daily News. Nov. 20, 28. (4.) John o'London's Weekly. Dec. 1, '28. (20:297.)

By Wallace B. Nichols. Bookman (London). May, '29. (76: 125.)

By P. Pavlov. Slavonic Review. Jan., 29. (7:492.)

By Alexey Remizov. Slavonic Review. Jan., '29. (7:473.)

By R. Ellis Roberts. Bookman (London). Aug., '28. (74:239.)

By J. S. New Age. Dec. 20, '28. (44:93.)

By V. Sackville-West. Nation and Athenæum. Sept. 8, '28. (43: 729.)

By Henry C. Shelley. Bookman (London). Aug., '28. (74:266.)

By Leo Shestov. Slavonic Review. Jan., '29. (7:465.)

By Lucie Simpson. Fortnightly Review. Oct., '28. (124:474.)

By Countess Tolstoy. Spectator. Oct. 20, '28. (519.) Oct. 27, '28. (573.) Nov. 3, '28. (650.) Nov. 10, '28. (692.) Nov. 17, '28. (730.)

By Alexander Werth. Slavonic Review. Mar., '29. (7:755.)

By Rebecca West. Time and Tide. Dec. 14, '28. (9:1229.)

By Leonard Woolf. Nation and Athenæum. Nov. 24, '28. (44: 294.) Feb. 9, '29. (44:654.) Apr. 6, '29. (45:17.)

Tomlinson, H. M.

By H. W. Axford. Bermondsey Book. Mar.–May, '29. (102.)

Townend, W.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Nov. 29, '28. (27:932.)

By Gerald Gould. Observer. Nov. 11, '28. (8.) Daily News. Dec. 31, '28. (4.)

Trites, W. B.

By Vera Brittain. Time and Tide. Sept. 21, '28. (9:876.)

By Cyril Connolly. New Statesman. Nov. 3, '28. (32:125.) Feb. 2, '29. (32:533.)

By Clemence Dane. Good Housekeeping (London). Apr., '29. (36.)

By C. A. Dawson Scott. Bookman (London). Dec., '28. (75: 195.)

By Gerald Gould. Daily News. Sept. 24, '28. (4.) Observer. Sept. 23, '28. (8.)

By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). Sept. 22, '28. (146:365.)

By Sylvia Lynd. Time and Tide. Jan. 25, '29. (10:89.)

By Louis J. McQuilland. G. K.'s Weekly. Oct. 13, '28. (8:74.)
By J. S. New Age. Nov. 1, '28. (44:10.)
By Edward Shanks. London Mercury. Feb., '29. (19:428.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Sept. 22, '28. (376.)

Tweedale, Violet.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Dec. 13, '28. (27: 992.)

Undset, Sigrid.

By L. Aas. Bookman (London). Feb., '29. (75:263.)

Verga, Giovanni.

Anonymous. Bookman (London). Oct., '28. (75:62.)
Anonymous. New Statesman. June 16, '28. (31:338).

Wakefield, H. R.

Anonymous. Bookman (London). July, '28. (74:230.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 23, '29. (28: 421.)
By Gerald Gould. Daily News. May 20, '29. (4.)

Walpole, Hugh.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Oct. 18, '28. (27:754.)
By Susan Ertz. Observer. Oct. 21, '28. (8.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). Nov. 3, '28. (146:582.)
By Sylvia Lynd. Time and Tide. Nov. 9, '28. (9:1074.)
By A. M. Manchester Guardian. Oct. 26, '28. (7.)
By Raymond Mortimer. Nation and Athenæum. Oct. 20, '28. 44:111.)
By M. A. S. Bookman (London). Dec., 28. (75:190.)
By Ralph Straus. Sunday Times. Oct. 28, '28. (9.)
By Rachel Annand Taylor. Spectator. Oct. 20, '28. (557.)

Walsh, Louis J.

Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Mar. 14, '29. (28: 209.)

Waugh, Alec.

Anonymous. Bookman (London). June, '28. (74:186.)

Webb, Mary.

By Almey St. John Adcock. Bookman (London). Mar., '29. (75:332.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Jan. 31, '29. (28:78.)
By C. Everyman. May 2, '29. (6.)
By Geraint Goodwin. Everyman. May 2, '29. (14.)
By B. K. M. Manchester Guardian. Mar. 15, '29. (7.)
By H. P. Marshall. Edinburgh Review. Apr., '29.
By Edwin Pugh. Bookman (London). July, '28. (74:193.)
By D. R. Irish Statesman. Feb. 16, '29. (11:481.)

Wells, Catherine.
Anonymous. Bookman (London). June, '28. (74:186.)
Weyman, Stanley J.
By Leonard Huxley. Cornhill Magazine. June, '28. (64:752.)
Wilde, Oscar.
By G. T. Atkinson. Cornhill Magazine. May, '29. (66:559.)
Williamson, Henry.
By Henry Williamson. T. P.'s Weekly. Aug. 18, '28. (10:510.)
Wister, Owen.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. July 5, '28. (27:502.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. July 29, '28. (6.) Daily News. July 30, '28. (4.)
By L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). Aug. 4, '28. (146:158.)
By Alan Porter. Spectator. July 7, '28. (31.)
By Edward Shanks. London Mercury. Sept., '28. (18:537.)
Wodehouse, P. G.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 9, '29. (28:384.)
By Gerald Gould. Observer. May 5, '29. (8.)
By Louis J. McQuilland. Queen. Feb. 13, '29. (26.)
By R. H. S. Manchester Guardian. May 31, '29. (7.)
By Ralph Straus. Sunday Times. May 12, '29. (9.)
By Leonora Wodehouse. Strand Magazine. Jan., '29. (20.)
Wren, Percival Christopher.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. Mar. 21, '29. (28: 244.)
Yates, Dornford.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. May 2, '29. (28:364.)
Young, Francis Brett.
By Francis Brett Young. T. P.'s Weekly. May 11, '29. (12:60.)

# VOLUMES OF SHORT STORIES PUBLISHED IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

## JUNE 1, 1928, TO MAY 31, 1929.

NOTE. *An asterisk before a title indicates distinction.*

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BUSCH, MARIE, *translator,* (*Austrian.*) * Selected Austrian Short Stories. Oxford: University Press.
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GOGOL, NIKOLAI. (*Russian.*) * Mirgorod. Chatto and Windus.
GREEN, JULIAN. (*French.*) * Pilgrim on the Earth. Blackamore Press.
KELLER, GOTTFRIED. (*German Swiss.*) * People of Seldwyla, and Seven Legends. Dent.
KESSEL, J. (*French.*) * Pure in Heart. Gollancz.
MANN, THOMAS. (*German.*) * Death in Venice. Secker.
MELVILLE, LEWIS, *and* HARGREAVES, REGINALD, *editors*. (*German.*) * Great German Short Stories. Benn.
PUSHKIN, ALEXANDER. (*Russian.*) * Queen of Spades. Blackamore Press.
TREND, J. B., *editor*. (*Spanish.*) * Spanish Short Stories of the Sixteenth Century. Oxford: University Press.
VOLTAIRE, F.-M. AROUET DE. (*French.*) White Bull. Scholartis Press.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

*(See also the collections for 1926, 1927, and 1928.)*

ADAMS, ARTHUR H. Born at Lawrence, New Zealand, June 6, 1872. Educated at Otago University. Married. Has been a war correspondent and on the staff of the *Sydney Sun*. Author of many novels, plays and volumes of verse. Lives in Sydney, Australia.

ANGLIN, NORMAN. Born in 1891. Educated at Rugby School. Four years in the Navy. Author of "The Wandering Wind," 1917; "1919," 1919; "Melilot," 1927; "Hapton's Daughter," 1928; "Poison Gas," 1928.

AUJARD, EDOUARD A. Born in Tasmania. Spent most of his life in Melbourne. Engineer ashore and afloat. Trader and planter in New Hebrides. Served three years in Australian Navy. Teacher for eighteen months in Victoria Education Department. Journalist for last seven years. Has published fifty short stories in Australian magazines. Married. Lives in Middle Brighton, Victoria, Australia.

BARCLAY, MRS. HUBERT. Wife of Lt. Col. Hubert Barclay, J.P. for Hertfordshire. Lady of Grace of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. Author of "Trevor Lordship," 1911; "The Giant Fisher," 1912; "A Dream of Blue Roses," 1912; "East of the Shadows," 1913; "The Taste of Brine," 1914. Has been Central President of the Mother's Union for eight years. Is best known as a public speaker in connection with women, the home, and moral questions. Lives at Letty Green, Hertford.

BARKER, NUGENT. Educated at Cheltenham College. Began life as a black and white artist. In 1914 the doctors failed to pass him into the army on account of his eyes. Has recently devoted himself entirely to literature. He comes from one of the oldest Irish families, the Nugents of Westmeath. Lives in London.

BEALE, NORA ST. JOHN. Elder daughter of the late Llewellyn Griffiths. Educated at Roedean and in Germany. Married in 1917. Has lived since 1920 in a remote part of Kenya, where her husband has a stock farm. Author of "Mustard and Cress," 1924; "Flame and Wind," 1926.

"BIRMINGHAM, GEORGE A." (JAMES O. HANNAY.) Born July 16, 1865. Educated at Haileybury and Trinity College, Dublin. Canon of St. Patrick's Cathedral and Rector of Mells. Author of numerous novels, plays, etc. Lives at Mells, Somerset.

BLANCKENSEE, MURIEL D. Born at Kingswood, Warwickshire. Author of "Chrysalis."

BOWEN, ELIZABETH. Born in Dublin, June 7, 1899. Lived as a child chiefly in Dublin and Co. Cork. Afterwards in the south of England.

Educated at Downe House School. Author of "Encounters," 1923; "Ann Lee's," 1926; "The Hotel," 1927; "The Last September," 1928. Before her marriage she lived chiefly in Ireland, London, and abroad. Married Alan Charles Cameron in 1923. Lives in Oxford, where her husband has an appointment.

CLARK, DUDLEY. Born in 1889. For some years a writer of topographical and descriptive articles and sketches. Since the war has been a contributor of humorous articles and stories to many English periodicals. Author of "Bateman and I in Filmland," illustrated by H. M. Bateman. Lives in London.

COOK, H. T. KEMBALL. Nephew of Sir Edward T. Cook. Born in 1878. Educated at Felsted. Freelance writer. Author of "The Twisted Skein." Lives at Romford, Essex.

CORNIER, VINCENT. Born at Coatham, Yorkshire, January 22, 1898. Educated in secondary schools and privately, at Leeds University, and at the University of Vienna. First work published at the age of fifteen. Served at the age of seventeen with the Advance Echelon of No. 1 Reserve Aeroplane Squadron, R.F.C.; B.E.F., France, for ten months. Discharged in January, 1916; re-entered R.A.F., for commissioned rank early in 1918. Appointed Recruiting Organiser under the National Recruiting Council of Ireland in the same year. Travelled extensively throughout Europe and the Near East during years succeeding on the Armistice. On the scene of almost every disturbance of magnitude in those early post-war years from the Vienna revolutionary riots to the futile attempt of the ex-Emperor Karl of Austria to regain his throne. Took a minor self-defensive part in the Burgenland fighting of 1921. Edited a small country newspaper at the age of twenty-four. Eventually attained Fleet Street serving first in the London offices of the *Yorkshire Evening Post* and then for two and a half years on the editorial staff of the Central Press, Ltd. Now contributes exclusively to the Cassell group of magazines.

CRAWSHAW, ANNICE. Secondary school education and at Stockwell College, London. Teacher. Lives in Bury, Lancashire.

CROCKER, CLARICE IRENE. Born in Cathcart, Cape Colony, of British parentage. Has been a music teacher for some years in South Africa. Has studied music in London. Injured in babyhood and slightly crippled, but an excellent rider both on horses and motor cycles. Has won several gold medals in speed trials on the latter. Can also pilot an aeroplane, though she has not yet gained a pilot's certificate. Lives in South Africa.

CUMBERLAND, MARTEN. "Born in London, 1893, of rich but honest parents. Educated, chiefly as regards the lower dorsal aspect, at Cranleigh, Surrey. Spent seven years at sea,—honest parents having lost money,—and worked technically as a wireless operator, but

squandered employer's time in personal studies. Afterwards drifted into journalism. Held editorial jobs with the Amalgamated Press and Allied Newspapers, but not for long. 'Free-lanced' with all kinds of work. Recently committed marriage and settled in Paris. Recreations: pelote-playing and educating editors." Author of "Behind the Scenes"; "Loaded Dice"; "The Perilous Way"; "The New Economics" (with R. Harrison); "How to Write Serial Fiction" (with Michael Joseph).

DAVEY, NORMAN. Born in 1888. Educated at Cambridge University. Edited the *Granta,* 1909. Contributed to *Punch.* Studied at Montpellier University, 1914. War Service on the Western Front, R.E., 1914–1919. War Office, 1918–1919. Author of "The Gas Turbine," 1913; "Desiderium," 1920; "Pilgrim of a Smile," 1921; "Guinea Girl," 1921; "Good Hunting," 1923; "Studies in Tidal Power," 1923; "Yesterday," 1924; "Babylon and Candlelight," 1927; "Judgment Day," 1928. Lives in France.

DAWSON, CONINGSBY. Born at High Wycombe, February 26, 1883. Educated at Mill Hill School and Merton College, Oxford. Has resided chiefly in the United States and Canada since 1905. Literary adviser to an American publishing house, 1910–13. Served with the Canadian First and Fourth Divisions as Artillery Lieutenant. Made the Central European Starvation Report for Mr. Hoover, 1920. Married. One son. Hobby: Lecturing. Author of "The Worker and Other Poems," 1906; "The Garden Without Walls," 1913; "The Raft," 1914; "Slaves of Freedom," 1916; "Carry On"; "The Glory of the Trenches"; "Out to Win"; "Living Bayonets"; "The Test of Scarlet"; "It Might Have Happened to You," 1921; "The Vanishing Point," 1922; "Christmas Outside of Eden," 1922; "The Coast of Folly," 1924; "Pilgrims of the Impossible," 1928; "The Unknown Soldier," 1929; "When Father Christmas Was Late," 1929; etc.

DEARDEN, HAROLD. Of Lancashire and Manx stock. Born about forty years ago. Educated at Cambridge University and the London Hospital. Surgeon-in-Charge of the Anglo-American Hospital in the early days of the war, later medical officer of a Guards Battalion. Wounded twice. Is a racing motorist and fond of boxing and wrestling. Author of numerous works on psychological subjects. Has written two plays, "Interference" and "Two White Arms." Ran away from home at an early age and joined a circus. He has been a professional chauffeur, has lived in working men's dwellings on London's East Side, and has sold newspapers on the Strand.

DICKIE, TOM. Born at Omagh, Northern Ireland, in 1896. Educated at Cheltenham College. War Service. Has managed private zoological collections. Lives in Chelsea and Ireland.

ELSTEIN, NOAH. Born in London, August 28, 1900. Went to a

Manchester elementary school and left at fourteen to go to work. Studied music and became a professional violinist. Author of "Israel in the Kitchen," 1926, which gained the Jewish Drama League prize for the best modern play of Anglo-Jewish life. Lives in Manchester.

EUSTACE, C. J. Born in Walton-on-Thames about twenty-five years ago. Educated at Felsted. Went out to Canada in 1923. Has worked in a bank, sold magazines from door to door, reported on a newspaper, edited a publisher's trade paper, sold advertising, and is at present editor and publicity man for a book club. Author of "The Scarlet Gentleman," 1929. His ambition is to retire one day to England and live in a cottage by the sea. At present, he lives in Toronto.

FISHER, O. N., is an Irishwoman living in the south of France. She studied art for a time in London. Some years ago her interest in the poetry of Walt Whitman led her to make a pilgrimage to the United States in search of the America that is celebrated so magnificently in "Leaves of Grass." She failed to find it. She has done much journalistic work under another name, and is at present engaged upon a novel.

FLATHER, HORACE. ("NORMAN WESTON.") Born in South Yorkshire, 1897. Served with the Infantry and later the R.A.F. during the war. Decorated for bravery in action on the Somme front. Received early training in journalism on the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*. Is now Magazine Editor of *The Argus*, Cape Town, South Africa. Is a keen student of the drama, acts occasionally, and writes plays for production by repertory theatre societies.

GAUKROGER, ELEANOR, was born forty-four years ago in Halifax, Yorkshire. Elementary schooling. "I worked in a factory in Halifax from the age of twelve to twenty-five years, and I hated that work and that factory with a deep abiding hatred throughout those thirteen years. Then I was appointed a supplementary teacher in an elementary school in Halifax through the influence of my old headmistress. I stayed in the teaching profession for six years, and while in it I qualified, and when I changed from it I was fully certificated. I left it and took up work which is called Health Visiting and is directed by the Health Ministry. I did this because the idea of helping the weak and sick always seemed the greatest idea to me. I have also qualified for this and still do this work. I would rather than anything have been a doctor. The little writing that I do is a hobby or an offshoot. I began by writing little sketches of these splendid Yorkshire people whom I meet in my work." Author of "Yorkshire Hill Folk," 1928. Lives in Halifax.

GIBBONS, STELLA. Born in 1902 in Kentish Town, London. Educated at the North London Collegiate School for Girls and University College, London. At the age of twenty-one, she joined the

staff of the British United Press, a Canadian News Agency, as a decoder of foreign cables, and remained with them for three years. Is now a reporter on *The Evening Standard*. Lives in London.

GILMOUR, CHARLES S. Born at Sydney, N.S.W., in 1889. Educated at Sydney Grammar School. Served abroad during the war with the Australian Field Artillery. A frequent contributor of verse and stories to Australian periodicals. Lives in Sydney, Australia.

GOITEIN, EDWARD, was born with the century in London. "I was educated at the City of London School, but that didn't do me any harm. After leaving school at the end of 1918, I decided that I had better prevent the next war coming, and that it would be as well if I became Prime Minister for the purpose. With this end in view I read for the Bar and took a course of political science at the London School of Economics. I have since decided not to become Prime Minister, but having been called to the Bar, I spend my days interpreting dead men's wills, winding up defunct companies or bringing to birth embryonic ones. When not engaged on this legal midwifery and sextonry, I write short stories. All of these are accepted by intelligent and rejected by unintelligent editors. Naturally, I don't know anything else of interest about myself except that I am a Jew. I can't claim any credit for that, because I was born that way. For further particulars apply to Scotland Yard." Lives in London.

GORDON, JAN. Born in 1882. Educated at Marlborough College; subsequently as a mining engineer, which profession he practised for two years with conspicuous lack of success. Studied art and has exhibited at the Royal Academy and the Paris Salon. Married in 1909. Taught etching in Paris. Honorary Captain in the Serbian Army 1915 (Hospitals). Temporary Lieutenant R.N.V.R., Camouflage Section, 1917. Official painter, War Museum, 1918. Has studied Spanish guitar and folk music since 1920. Jack of all trades, painter, etcher, critic, traveller, novelist, and folk musician. Author of numerous volumes of travel and novels. Lives in Paris.

GREGSON, JAMES R., is forty years of age. Born in Brighouse, Yorkshire, of working-class parents. Had a Board-school education. Began work at twelve in cotton-factory. At seventeen became office boy in steel foundry and had two seasons for commercial subjects at a Technical Evening School. Spent ten years as a civil engineer's clerk on a railway company's service. Afterwards Acting Manager of Huddersfield Theatre Royal. Since then, a cinema manager; the director of the dramatic experiment known as the League's Industrial Theatre; a cost clerk in a perambulator factory in Hunslet; a journalist now, freelance, in the intervals of his theatrical work. Keenly interested in the little theatre movement,

he was one of the founders of the Huddersfield Thespians and the Leeds Civic Playhouse, a free theatre, with which he is at present connected as producer and actor during the season. Author of "T'Marsdens," "Young Imeson," (both produced at the Everyman Theatre, Hampstead), "The Devil a Saint," "The Way of an Angel," "Sar' Alice," and other plays. Has acted widely in Yorkshire, played in his own plays in London, and acted in Germany. "Still as poor as a crow!" Lives at Huddersfield.

GRIFF, ALAN. Born at Leeds in 1900. Was for some time associated with the *Manchester Guardian*. Studied music as a boy. Writer of short stories and broadcaster. Author of "Marmosets and Nightingales." Lives at Knutsford, Cheshire.

"GUNN, A. GORDON." (ARTHUR G. GODSMAN.) Born at Ellon, Aberdeenshire, August 24, 1894. Journalist. Served on Aberdeen newspapers prior to war and on all important South African newspapers since 1920. Is now on the Sub-Editorial Staff of *The Star,* Johannesburg, South Africa.

HADFIELD, JOHN. Born in 1907 near Birmingham on the borders of the Black Country. Educated at Bradfield College in Berkshire. Came to London at the age of eighteen and worked for two and a half years in sumptuous advertising agencies. Having beheld sufficient vainglory, liquor and corruption to last him for life, retired to poverty and peace, first in a bookshop, then in a publishing house. He now composes book-wrappers and book-advertisements during the day and writes during the night. Lives in London.

HESSELGRAVE, E. Born in Manchester in 1907. Educated at Manchester Grammar School and took an Open History Scholarship from there to New College, Oxford, in 1925. Came down from Oxford in 1928 with a 2nd. Is now teaching. Lives in Manchester.

HORT, G. M. Born in Gloucestershire and educated at home. Has written stories and verse since a very early age. Author of "Tomorrow's Road."

HUDDLESTON, SISLEY. Born May 28, 1883, at Barrow-in-Furness. Entered Civil Service but soon retired. Contributed short stories and essays to British and American magazines. Took up residence in Paris and became interested in political questions. Period of intensive journalism changed character of his output. Has been correspondent for *The Times,* the old *Westminster Gazette,* the *Observer,* the *Christian Science Monitor,* and other papers. Author of "Articles de Paris," "France," "History of France," "Louis XIV in Love and in War," "Those Europeans," "Poincaré," "Normandy," "A Little Guide to Paris," "In and About Paris," "Peace-Making at Paris," "France and the French," "Bohemian, Literary and Social Life in Paris," and "Mr. Paname: A Paris Fantasia." Has now returned to story-writing. Lives in Paris.

HUEFFER, OLIVER MADOX. Author of numerous books of fiction, travel, and so forth. Lives in Paris.

HUNT, VIOLET. Born in Durham. Daughter of Alfred William Hunt, the painter. Married in 1911. Author of "The Maiden's Progress," 1894; "A Hard Woman," 1895; "Unkist, Unkind!" 1897; "The Human Interest," 1899; "Affairs of the Heart," 1900; "The Celebrity at Home," 1904; "Sooner or Later," 1904; "White Rose of Weary Leaf," 1908; "The Wife of Altamont," 1910; "Tales of the Uneasy," 1910; "The Doll," 1911; "The Desirable Alien," 1913; "The House of Many Mirrors," 1915; "Their Lives," 1916; "The Last Ditch," 1918; "Their Hearts," 1921; "Tiger Skin," 1924; "More Tales of the Uneasy," 1925; "The Flurried Years," 1926; etc. Lives in London.

KERSHAW, FAY. Is a native of Cheshire. Married. Has in preparation a book of short stories on a nature theme. Lives near Manchester.

"LANE, JANE." (LUCY G. MASON.) Is nineteen years of age and a shorthand-typist. Lives in London.

LINKLATER, ERIC. Born in 1899. Educated at Aberdeen Grammar School and Aberdeen University. Left school to join the army. Served in France with the Black Watch. Wounded. Studied medicine. Gave it up. Graduated M.A., 1925. Assistant editor of *The Times of India,* Bombay, 1925–27. Travelled in Persia and South Russia. Assistant to the Professor of English at Aberdeen University, 1927–28. Now holds a two-year Commonwealth Fellowship in the United States. Author of "White Maa's Saga," 1929; and "Poet's Pub," to be published shortly.

LYONS, ALBERT MICHAEL NEIL. Born at Kimberley, South Africa, 1880. Educated at Bedford Grammar School and at Hanover. Has studied law and accountancy. Author of numerous novels, plays, and volumes of short stories. Lives at Wisborough Green, Sussex.

MCCALLUM, G. R. Born in Victoria, Australia, and moved to Queensland at the age of twelve. Still lives in Queensland.

MACDONALD, K. C. Born in Dublin in that scene of battle, the Gresham Hotel, of American parents. Educated in Convent schools in America and England. Spent some years in Oxford, taking no degrees, but doing odd jobs for odd people. Afterwards settled in London, took up a few more odd jobs, for which she was essentially unfitted, such as art criticism in *The Universe.* Finally settled down to a peaceful old age on the edge of Hampstead Heath. Hobbies: Book-reviewing and housework.

MACDONELL, ÆNEAS RANALD, C.B.E. Born 1875. 21st chief of Glengarry. British Vice-Consul at Baku, 1912–16. Served in Dunsterforce and North Persian Forces 1916–18. (Major, Despatches, C.B.E.) Afterwards appointed temporary 1st Division Clerk in the

Foreign Office. Now assistant Foreign Editor of the *Morning Post.* Author of "The Great Experiment" under the pseudonym of Misha Maude. Lives in London.

MACNAMARA, BRINSLEY. Born in 1890. Son of an Irish national schoolteacher. Educated at his father's schools in Co. Westmeath, and later in Dublin. Associated with the Abbey Theatre Company as an actor, 1910–13. Turned to journalism in 1913. Author of the following novels: "The Valley of the Squinting Windows," 1918; "The Clanking of Chains," 1919; "In Clay and in Bronze" ("The Irishman"), 1920; "The Mirror in the Dusk," 1921; and "The Various Lives of Marcus Igoe," 1929. Has also written the following plays: "The Rebellion in Ballycullin," 1919; "The Land for the People," 1920; "The Glorious Uncertainty," 1923; "Look at the Heffernans!", 1926; "The Master," 1928; and "A Grand House in the City," in preparation. Lives in Dublin. Has been Registrar of the National Gallery of Ireland since 1925.

MAKIN, WILLIAM JAMES. Born at Manchester in 1895. After serving in France during the war spent his time as a roving journalist. Three years in India, China, and Japan. Then went to Africa and spent five years roaming between Cairo and the Cape. Was special correspondent for American and English newspapers during the tour of the Prince of Wales in Africa. One of the first white men to cross the Kalahari Desert. Has been in three revolutions, and in one at Lisbon received a bullet in the neck. Author of "The Price of Exile," "Two Moons," "Syncopated Love," and "Through Africa's Mystery Desert." Is now in London.

MASSINGHAM, HUGH. Son of the late H. W. Massingham. Educated at Westminster School. Joined the staff of the *Eastern Daily Press* where his father started his career. Is now on the staff of the *Manchester Guardian.* Lives in Manchester.

MENDES, ALFRED H. Born in Trinidad, 1897, of Portuguese parents. Educated at Queen's Royal College, Trinidad, and Hitchin Grammar School, Hertfordshire. Joined British army in 1915. Served two years in France, gassed and wounded. Returned to Trinidad after the war, and went into business, writing verse during spare moments. Has been writing short stories for two years and is now engaged on a novel, the scene of which is laid in Trinidad.

"MORROUGH, E. R." Born in 1897 at Kingston-on-Thames. Married. Has lived for eight years in Egypt, and is now a resident in Tanganika Territory. His chief interest in life is the study of birds.

NICOLSON, HON. HAROLD, C. M. G. Born at Teheran, Persia, 1886. Married Victoria Sackville-West. Diplomat. Educated at Wellington College, and at Balliol College, Oxford. Entered the Foreign Office in 1909. Attached to the British Delegation to the Peace Con-

ference. Now at the British Embassy, Berlin. Author of "Paul Verlaine," 1921; "Sweet Waters," 1921; "Tennyson," 1923; "Byron, the Last Journey," 1924; "Swinburne," 1926; "Some People," 1927. Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. Lives in Berlin.

O'Byrne, Cathal. Born in Belfast. Author of "The Grey Feet of the Wind," and many poems and short stories. Is now in America giving recitals of Irish folk songs and poetry.

O'Callaghan, Maeve. Born in Sheffield and educated in Ireland. Twenty-five years of age. Lives in London.

O'Connor, Frank. Born in Cork in 1903. Educated at North Monastery, Cork. Has written verse in Irish and English, and published in various periodicals translations and studies of Irish poetry. Founder and first producer of the Cork Drama League. Lives in Dublin.

O'Leary, Margaret. Taught for some years at St. Mary's Secondary School, Greenock, Scotland. For the past two years she has devoted herself exclusively to writing. Author of a three-act peasant play called "That Woman." Lives in Dublin.

"Onions, Oliver." Author of "The Compleat Batchelor"; "Tales of a Far Riding"; "The Odd-Job Man"; "The Drakestone"; "Back o' the Moon"; "Admiral Eddy"; "Pedlar's Pack"; "Little Devil Doubt"; "Draw in Your Stool"; "The Exception"; "Good Boy Seldom"; "Widdershins"; "In Accordance with the Evidence"; "The Debit Account"; "The Story of Louie"; "The Two Kisses"; "A Crooked Mile"; "Mushroom Town"; "The New Moon"; "A Case in Camera"; "The Tower of Oblivion"; "Peace in our Time"; "Ghosts in Daylight"; "The Spite of Heaven"; and "The Painted Face." Lives near Windsor.

Parsons, Anthony. Born at Nuneaton, June 1, 1893. Educated at King Edward VI's School. Served with the 98th Regiment and R.F.C. Travelled extensively in India, Kashmir, Africa, Egypt, and Arabia. Traveller and big-game hunter. First work appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1925 under the pseudonym "Fundi." Lives in London.

Pentz, Herbert Frederick. Born August 14, 1886, at Wellington, Cape Province, South Africa, and educated there. Served in the Irregular Colonial Forces in the Boer War at the age of fifteen. Entered the Colonial Office of the old Cape Colony in 1903. Studied law at South African College, Cape Town. Served with the South African Infantry (Overseas) Contingent during the war. (M.M. and M.C.) Now holds responsible administrative post in the South African Service. Writes in Afrikaans as well as English. Lives at Cape Town.

Raymond, Walter. Born in 1852, the son of a Yeovil glove-manufacturer. "Educated at a 'Commercial Academy.' I passed

into the factory. Commerce had no charms and a restless activity urged me to enormous tramps across moorlands and over hills through the pleasant villages of Somerset. The old folk, their lore, their speech fascinated me. Unconsciously acquiring material for authorship I ventured a serial in the local paper, at which indignant friends rightly scoffed. A two-decker published by Bentley made a brief voyage and sank. 'Gentleman Upcott's Daughter,' which appeared in Unwin's Pseudonym Library, attracted some attention, and after a considerable sale died with the series. After that publication presented no difficulties. 'Love and Quiet Life' was commissioned by Dr. Robertson Nicoll. Several novels were published and also volumes of sketches of rural life. Dent proposed to publish a uniform edition of my works. Suddenly war came. My whole time was devoted to war work, and the books went out of print." Lives at Street, Somerset.

ROYDE-SMITH, NAOMI. Educated at Clapham High School and at Geneva. Was literary editor of the *Weekly Westminster* till 1924. Author of "A Private Anthology," 1924; "The Tortoiseshell Cat," 1925; "The Housemaid," 1926; "Skin Deep," 1927; "John Fanning's Legacy," 1927; "Children in the Wood," 1928; and "The Lover," 1928. Lives in London.

SHAW, HERBERT, has written stories for all the English magazines. "He works in a rum little roof-attic overlooking the National Gallery and Trafalgar Square, and his friends can find him at the Savage Club, and he is one of the few English writers who didn't take part in the War (Great)—not with a gun, that is. He was a Sergeant (unpaid) in an office in Dublin, where his family came from years ago. His hobbies are golf and just leaving work alone."

SHEARD, BENVENUTO. Born at Sportigallo, Sieci, near Florence, in July, 1905. Educated at various schools and privately and abroad. Left Oxford in 1923 without a degree and since then has lived largely abroad. Now lives at East Hendred, Berkshire.

SMITH, PAULINE. Born in the Little Karoo, Cape Colony, South Africa. Her father was the first London doctor to settle in the district. Educated by governesses and at the age of twelve went to England for further study. Her first stories dealt with Scottish life, and appeared in the *Aberdeen Free Press*. Since then she has written exclusively about the Little Karoo. Author of "The Little Karoo" and "The Beadle." Lives in England.

SPRIGGE, SIR SQUIRE, KT. Born June 22, 1860. On the staff of the *Lancet* since 1892. After graduating in medicine he held various posts in London, and then became private secretary to Sir Russell Reynolds, President of the Royal College of Physicians. He was also occupied in journalism, medical and lay, and certain stories having attracted the attention of Walter Besant, he was invited

to assist him in the early organisation of the Society of Authors. He has preserved roughly his original divided interest between medical and lay literature. Educated at Uppingham; Caius College, Cambridge; and St. George's Hospital. Author of "Methods of Publishing," 1890; "Life and Times of Thomas Wakley," 1896; "Odd Issues," 1898; edited "Autobiography of Sir Walter Besant," 1901; "An Industrious Chevalier," 1902; "Medicine: Its Practice and Public Relations," 1905; "Some Considerations of Medical Education," 1910; "Physic and Fiction," 1921; Editor of "The Conduct of Practice," 1927. Chairman of the Society of Authors, 1910–13. Lives in London and at Salt Hill, Bucks.

"Talland, John." (Wilfrid H. Middleton.) Born 1898. Left Monkton House School and joined the army in 1914. Served as Private, Corporal, Sergeant, and Lieutenant. Saw action in France as Tank Commander. After the war engaged in commerce and is now export manager to a large whisky factory in London. Commenced writing in 1927. Lives in London.

Towers, Frances. Born in Calcutta, educated at Bedford. A member of the staff of the Bank of England since 1905. Lives in London.

Townley, Marion. Born in Manchester in 1907. Only child of a Lancashire Congregational Minister. Left school at sixteen and gained a pianoforte teacher's diploma in 1927. Now writes sketches of Lancashire life. Lives in Lancashire.

Van Der Post, Laurens. Born at Philippolis, Orange Free State. Grew up on a farm. Educated at Grey College School, Bloemfontein. Joined the staff of the *Natal Advertiser* and was associated with Roy Campbell and William Plomer in the production of a literary monthly, *Voorslag*. Later he went for his newspaper to East Africa and Japan. Gave up journalism eighteen months ago. Now devotes himself to literature. Is twenty-two years of age. Lives in London.

Ware, Jessica. Born February 19, 1906, in London. Educated at St. George's School, Harpenden; Bedford College, London University, 1924–26; Sorbonne, 1926–28. Lives at Amberley, Gloucestershire.

Warner, R. E. Born March 9, 1905. Educated at St. George's School, Harpenden, and at Wadham College, Oxford. Profession: schoolmaster. Lives at Sonning, Berkshire.

Watson, E. H. Lacon. Born August 15, 1865, at Sharnford, Hinckley, Leicestershire. Educated at The Grange, West Cowes, Isle of Wight, Winchester (Scholar) 1878–84; and Caius College, Cambridge, B.A. 1887. Took a mastership at Reading and subsequently at Blairlodge, Stirlingshire. Came to London in 1894. Was a freelance journalist, essayist and novelist till 1916. Was special

correspondent for Reuter's Agency on the Italian front till the end of the war, and then in Cologne with the troops till August, 1919. Subsequently special correspondent for Reuter at the Olympic Games, 1920. Married. Author of many novels and volumes of essays, and has written a good deal on games and sports. Lives in London.

WHARTON, J. ALGERNON. Born in Trinidad, June, 1900. Educated at Douai School, Reading, Berkshire. Did a little medicine, a little farming, and a little as a clerk in a merchant's office. Now at the Bar. Lives in Trinidad.

WILLIAMS, HARCOURT, is a well-known English actor who has written many short stories, poems, plays and articles. He lives in London.

THE END

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